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THE FIVE FRANKFORTERS

A ROMANCE OF THE HOUSE OF ROTHSCHILD

ACTING VERSION

CARL ROSSLER

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SALOMON

"Yes, Mother dear—I am"

The Five Frankforters

A Comedy in Three Acts

by

Carl Roessler

Authorized English Version

by

J. Fuchs

WITH A PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR
"CONCERNING THE JEWS OF FRANKFORT"

New York
THE H. K. FLY COMPANY
Publishers

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THE H. K. FLY COMPANY

CHARACTERS

OLD DAME GUDULA, *Arch-Mother of the House of Rothschild*

AMSCHEL
NATHAN
SALOMON } *Her sons*
CARL
JACOB

CHARLOTTE, *daughter of Salomon*

GUSTAVE, *Duke of Taunus*

COUNT-PALATINE CHRISTOPHER MAURICE, *his uncle*

PRINCESS EVELINE, *daughter of the Count-Palatine*

PRINCE KLAUSTHAL-AGORDO

THE PRINCESS

COUNT FEHRENBERG, *Major-Domo at the Court of Duke Gustave*

MADAM DE ST. GEORGES

BARON SEULBERG

THE CANON

PRIVY COUNCILLOR YSSEL

THE DUKE'S CHAMBER-VALET

COURT-JEWELER BOEL

ROSE
LIZZIE } *Domestics in Frau Gudula's house*

Concerning the Jews of Frankfort

By J. FUCHS

HERR ROESSLER'S idyll of the Rothschilds, now first made accessible to an English-reading public, has a tragical background, like every true comedy as distinguished from mere farce. The somber setting of its humors is the ancient Ghetto of Frankfort and the history of those who lived and suffered in it for many generations. Of this the *mise-en-scene* of "THE FIVE FRANKFORTERS" affords a palpable hint: the window of Frau Gudula's parlor in the family mansion of the Rothschilds discloses a view of Jews' Lane with its cramped and squalid misery. For a proper appreciation, on the part of the uninitiated reader, of the motives and soul-states of those who emerged from Jews' Lane into the roomier confinement of hostile surroundings without, a brief survey of the Frankfort Ghetto and the life therein is indispensably necessary.

I.

Among the fifty-six free towns of the Holy Roman Empire that emerged from the Westphalian Peace with their sovereign liberties intact, the city of Frankfort-on-the-Main was easily the first in civic greatness, abundant wealth and historical importance. Like nearly all considerable urban centers of the Rhinelands—like the

See Notes, page 24.

Jews it harbored—it loved to trace its origin to Roman colonization. And like its lesser neighbors it oppressed, plundered, persecuted and insulted its Jews throughout the Middle Ages with an unrelenting zeal, which among the Frankforters was still alive when it had calmed down or died away in most other communities along the Rhine and its estuaries. The term "Middle Ages," in Jewish reckoning, has a topographical significance as well as a chronological one; nor does it in point of time, cover the same extent of years as in ordinary acceptance. To exemplify: topographically, the Middle Ages for our own contemporaries among the Jews extend eastward from the Vistula and to the south from the straits of Gibraltar. Chronologically speaking, they ended for the community of Frankfort in 1864, when all civic restrictions were removed from them, after a contest that lasted for fifty years preceding their final emancipation.

In the Middle Ages as reckoned by common tale of years, the Jews of the lower and middle Rhine held their rights, properties and lives at such uncertain tenure that their refugees from Christian persecution have peopled the Slavic East of the Continent, where their offspring reside unto this very day. Nor is their seed unknown in America, where every roster of notabilities in the various trades and professions of the country abounds with names of Rhenish Jews.

Of those who stuck fast to the soil, braving death, despoilment and civic humiliation, the Jews of Frankfort were the most tenacious. There was a reason. Within the shelter of Frankfort's town walls they had a better chance, despite all handicaps, to thrive in the only pursuits allowed to them than anywhere else on German ground. The city of Frankfort-on-the-Main has been known all the world over as a Continental trading center of the first importance from the middle of the fifteenth century to this present day. The network of its trade relations extended to London, Amsterdam and Venice—enormous distances in a steamless age—a generation ere Columbus set sail for the New World. Early allusions to its commercial greatness will be found in the works of Aeneas Sylvius and of Luther as well as in Elizabethan screeds and in the

writers of the late Italian renascence. With the fame of its trading the name of its Jews was coupled from the beginning, as the most cursory examination of sixteenth century literature will reveal. "Frankfort," declares a modern German economist, [1]"has always been the classical Jews' Town of Germany." That this must have been for centuries the unanimous opinion of other cities of the Roman Empire is susceptible of documentary proof. In their treatment of the Jews they looked to Frankfort for guidance and advice. The governments of Hesse, Marburg, Brandenburg and Holstein, the archbishop of Mayence, the abbey of Fulda, and the cathedral chapter of Bamberg, the municipalities of Burgham (1509), Epstein (1612), Freidberg (1703), Gelnhausen (1519), Mergentheim (1785), Weikersheim (1743), Hamburg (1595, 1744), Cleve (1668), Hannover (1683), and Mannheim (1789), as well as many other cities and estates of the realm are on record as having elicited legal opinions from the town council of Frankfort concerning urban civil law, customary or written, in regulation of matters Jewish.[2] Some of these appeals to Frankfort custom or statute emanated from the Jewish communities of other towns, which proves that the "classical Jews Town" was considered such both by the Jews of Germany and their Teutonic rulers from the Age of Reformation to a time almost within memory of the living. That a race excluded during seven centuries of semi-outlawry from nearly all pursuits save commercial ones should have gravitated from the beginning toward an early center of German commerce is sufficiently intelligible.[3] That they adhered to it through the centuries in spite of crushing taxation and returned to it twice after a wholesale expulsion, would be little short of marvellous but for their peculiar situation all through the Dark Ages, in Frankfort and elsewhere within the Empire.

II.

To understand them and their ways, it should be remembered first, that social life in feudal Europe until the outbreak of the French revolution (and for some time thereafter) knew no liberty

—only liberties. All rights were based upon privileges, by which all social activities were parcelled out and fenced in. Every estate of the Holy Roman Empire, every profession, trade or handicraft had its own set of qualifications and disqualifications, its own courts of first or second instance, subject to territorial overlordship, canonical interference or imperial prerogative. Each set of group rights intersected others at nearly every turn. Often enough they abrogated each other from the first *ex vi termini* or subsequently by force of unforeseen and unprovided-for contingencies. As a natural consequence, interminable struggles and conflicts of jurisdiction ensued. Within the larger towns of the Empire there was no end to the wrangles over disputed professional boundary-lines between the guilds and crafts. In Frankfort and elsewhere, shoemakers would not suffer cobblers to make shoes as well as mend them; cordwainers invoked the law against bootmakers to keep them from making the better sorts of footwear; there was a bitterly disputed frontier between shoe-*makers* and shoe-*sellers;* menders for the second-hand trade were not suffered to pretend to the name of cobblers; in all German trading centers of any considerable size there was a crop of Jarndyce vs. Jarndyce cases arising out of traders' contentions regarding the specialties they were allowed to handle within the letter of their parchments. There was a good deal of friction between the guilds of Frankfort-on-the-Main. There was a severe and long-continued struggle going on between the guilds considered as a plebeian unit at the bottom and the wealthy merchant patricians with their learned retainers on top of Frankfort society. Against the alien of their hatred all these contending forces made a common front, as far as their internal dissensions would suffer them. In fact, whatever slender security the Jews enjoyed, they owed partly to these internal dissensions within the body politic of Frankfort and partly to the resistance of the town against the perpetual pretensions of the German Emperors. In the midst of never-ceasing attempts at exaction, they sometimes appealed to the Emperor against the town, and at other times to the town council against the Emperor. Both sides looked upon them as a first-rate source of ready money in case

of need. Both council and Emperor had therefore a certain interest in protecting them against the virulent hatred of the town guilds. There was no place for the Jews between the narrow, protected fastnesses of a guild life that rejected them. They were forbidden to own landed estate.[4] No reputable handicraft would apprentice them or tolerate their competition. The profession of arms was closed to them, likewise the learned callings. To make a living, nearly all Frankfort Jews engaged in bread-winning pursuits had to turn to commerce. The successful minority competed with the merchant patricians on top. The wretchedly poor majority, bent upon petty pawn-broking and huckstering of second-hand goods, collided with the guilds at the bottom.

As they increased in numbers, they pressed continually against the barriers of guild law. They could not all live by lending money on pledges, most of them having little or none to lend. Those that dealt in second-hand goods, were jealously watched by the handicrafts. Whenever they ventured to extend the range of their activities, they were driven in by the trades upon whose domain they trespassed. The shoes they bought they must not mend. They were forbidden to refit old clothes to suit their trade. When they bought hides or pelts to cut or color them, they were pounced upon by the furriers' guild, denounced and fined.[5] They were continually harassed by the jewelers who looked with an evil eye upon their trade in precious stones. A certain small remnant of applied manual skill was perforce vouchsafed to the Ghetto, on account of religious prohibitions. There had to be a few Jewish tailors, to supply the faithful with garments free from the forbidden mixture of flax and woolen (*shatness*). There had to be Jewish butchers to insure the ritually correct slaughtering of the meats permitted to sons of the Covenant. Phylacteries and prayer-shawls had to be of Jewish workmanship. These butchers and tailors, these leather-workers and embroiderers were a constant eyesore to the town guilds. The butchers, according to an old complaint,[6] were "hideously" (*graesslich*) forestalling the market. The tailors were accused of making staple-goods for the ready-to-wear trade—a severe offense against an economic system that frowned

upon wholesale manufactories of any kind whatsoever. The stern determination of the guilds to keep the Jews within prescribed bounds was an inevitable manifestation of the feudal spirit among the journeymen and master-mechanics of Frankfort-on-the-Main. If Christian bootmakers would riot and slay rather than permit Christian cobblers to make boots to measure, was it likely that either group would allow Jewish inroads, in an age when "Christian" and "human," in colloquial parlance, were interchangeable terms?[7]

In the town traffic between Jews and Christians there were no points of contact creative of good-will. Every point of contact was at the same time a point of friction. Jews and Christians did neither work nor pray together, nor sit together at meat or drink. They met neither at public rejoicings,[8] nor at secret haunts of vice.[9] Socially, they were kept apart by prejudice and tradition, by civil ordinance and religious law. When they met in the way of business, it was mostly at occasions of distress: pawnbrokers met their clients, money-lenders their debtors, buyers of second-hand goods met ruined tradesmen parting with their household goods. No good-will could be born of such encounters. And thus the tide of popular hatred kept on rising, until it bore down at times all legal barriers, as in the Frankfort massacre of 1349, in the town riot of 1616, and in a final mob insurrection against the Jews in August, 1819, three years before the time of action of Herr Roessler's play.

III.

The civic status of the Jews of Frankfort was primarily defined by a law of the realm. During the Middle Ages the Jews of Germany were literally the fiscal property (*Kammer-Knechte*) of the German Emperor. "Iudaei . . . ad cameram nostram pertineant," thus Frederick Barbarossa laid down the law in the twelfth century of our common era. To the communities wherein they resided, they stood in the relation of tolerated aliens, subject to the special police regulations (*Juden-Ordnungen, Juden-Staettig*

Keiten) of the municipalities that sheltered them. As serfs of the Emperor, their lives and chattels were under his especial protection. For this guardianship they paid him tutelary fees in regular tolls and irregular assessments. If the Emperor's protection of life and limb was uncertain, the payment part of the compact was not. In fact, levies upon the Jews were looked upon by the financiers of the imperial crown of Germany in a light similar to that in which hearth-money was considered by the goldsmiths of London under the Stuarts. They were at all times reckoned the most dependable regalia of the Holy Roman Empire, whose overlords more than once pawned their Jews to the free towns in times of financial embarrassment. In every transaction of that kind the Emperors were reluctant to let go their hold upon their "chamber-serfs." They never relaxed their grip upon them entirely, always reserving the right of redemption, of appelate jurisdiction over their serfs, and of certain customary gifts and hereditary taxes exempted by specification from a general transfer of taxation rights from the Emperor to the town. As will be seen further on, in the case of Frankfort, they were not content with the privileges secured them by express reservation, but attempted more than once to levy upon the Jews under pledge to the town, against the terms of the bargain struck between the high contracting parties and witnessed by imperial letters patent. Being at all times eager to re-assert their rights of overlordship, they welcomed Jewish appeals from municipal decrees to imperial *placets* as ready pretexts for meddling. And thus another paradox arose in a racial history rich in paradoxical situations: the same avarice that heaped grievous burdens upon the Jews rendered their persons comparatively safe as long as they were content to stay within the liberties of Frankfort.

They were first pledged to the town by Emperor Charles the Fourth of the House of Luxemburg in 1349 for a subsidy of 15,200 pound hellers, with the privilege of redemption, subject to a previous mortgage of 900 pound hellers per annum taken over by the city and due to Gerlach, Archbishop of Mayence, who ceded his claim to Frankfort upon payment in fee simple of 7,500 florins in 1358. By way of prudent after-thought, the Emperor made

claim in 1360 to a half share in the revenues drawn from Jews whose settlement in town postdated the original pledge. This half share he pledged in turn to Frankfort in 1372 for the sum of 6,000 florins, pending redemption. Neither the first nor the second pledge were ever redeemed, yet his successors during three centuries considered that they had an equity in the Jews of Frankfort over and above the "coronation gift" and the annual "sacrificial mite" of one florin per head, which were expressly reserved as crown regalia and invariably exacted during the entire existence of the Holy Roman Empire. Though Emperor Sigismund in 1425 confirmed the town by letters patent in its domain over its Jews, Maximilian, in 1510, attempted a big levy, threatening the protesting authorities of Frankfort with a loss of municipal privileges in case of resistance. His fiscal lost in a law-suit brought by the municipality in defense of its exclusive rights to levy upon the Jews, which did not deter Ferdinand II., during the Thirty Years War, to essay like exactions on several occasions. Finally, in 1685, Emperor Leopold demanded from the Jewish community of Frankfort 100,000 florins in defrayment of expenses incurred during his war against the Turks. The magistrate compromised upon a subsidy of 20,000 florins, paid upon His Majesty's solemn waiver, in his own name and that of his successors, of the redemption clauses of 1349 and 1372. Thenceforward the Jewry of Frankfort was subject to municipal taxation only, saving the two items mentioned hereinbefore.

IV.

Meantime, the Jews had to render unto Caesar what was Caesar's (and a good deal that wasn't in the shape of casual bribes) in addition to crushing municipal taxes and occasional extortions. Indeed, there was a grimly ludicrous element in the attitude of Frankfort toward its Jews. In reversal of conventionally accepted notions, the city throughout its history as an independent estate of the realm assumed the rôle of a Christian Shylock inexorably bearing down upon a Jewish Antonio. How it made thrift with the

Emperors' collateral, will be gathered from the following brief account:

Though forbidden by law to style themselves citizens of Frankfort, the Jews paid both ordinary taxes as due from townsmen and extraordinary ones as Jews. The latter came under the following heads:

1. Two thousand florins of annual *Protection-Money.*
2. Two hundred and fifty florins per annum by way of *rent for a town lot used as a Jewish cemetery.*
3. Four hundred yearly florins *for the maintenance of privies giving upon the town moat.*
4. An assessment of 130 florins per year as a contribution toward the cost of street-cleaning.
5. An annual fee of 5.30 fl. *for the periodical renewal of the cemetery lease.*
6. *Waterpipe-Money,* to the amount of 10½ florins in gold, payable on their wedding-day by every newly married Jewish couple.
8. Annual renewal of Rights of Domicile: 542.27 florins.
9. *Fair-Money,* paid by the Jewish traders around fair time for police protection. Amount varying, but estimated by the lessees to be worth a rent shilling of 250 florins p. a. during the years of 1792-1799.
10. *Night-Groats,* payable by Jewish sojourners for the privilege of temporary abode within the town liberties during fair times.
11. Assessment for the Inspection of Clothing offered for Sale (*Tuchschau-Geld*), 80 florins per annum.
12. For the municipal Inspection of Slaughtered Geese: 20 florins per annum.
13. *Tallow Dues*: 94.24 florins p. a.
14. *For Permission to Grind Passover Meal*: 3 florins p. a.
15. *Other Milling Permits*: estimated at 250 florins p. a.
16. *Sunday Passport Dues,* for permission to leave Jews' Lane on Sunday. Turned, in 1797, into a yearly tax of 150

florins, payable by the Jewish community to the town fiscal.

17. *Jewish Passport Dues* for travelers. Annual yield uncertain.
18. Fair Presents "according to ancient usage." Estimated by the Jews themselves in 1808 at 506.42 florins per annum.
19. The customary New Year's Presents to the Town Authorities, comprising an extraordinarily large number of petty gratuities, amounting altogether to about 1,000 florins.
20. *Paving Tolls,* estimated at 880 florins per annum.
21. *Soup Money* (*sic*) for the Town Guard: 3 florins p. a. from every head of the Jewish community.
22. *Town Scale Money,* for the weighing of Hebrew books.
23. *Building Inspectors' Tax.*
24. *Jews' Toll on Ox Hides.*
25. *Jews' Toll on Wine.*
26. *Jews' Toll in Release of Guard Duties.*

All this in excess of common town taxes and leaving casual extortions out of reckoning. Yet when in 1814, after 500 years of spoliation, the Jews of Frankfort pleaded the cause of their civic emancipation before the Congress of Vienna, the city magistrate had the calmness to remind the assembled notabilities of the 50,200 pound hellers paid for the Jews in 1349, of the 6,000 florins additional paid in 1372, and of Emperor Leopold's quit-claim of 1685 for a consideration of 20,000 florins:

. . . . *The pound of flesh*
Is dearly bought, 'tis mine, and I will have it.

And to the proffered mediation of neighboring powers the city made answer by a publication of the old parchments in 1817:

My deeds upon my head—I crave the Law,
The penaltie and forfeit of my bond.

V.

Frankfort-on-the-Main was the first German city to adopt and the last to abandon the policy of segregating the Jews in an out-

lying quarter of the town, after the earlier manner of the Spanish and Italian communities. Until 1462 they dwelled wherever they chose, very often under the same roof with Christians, and not infrequently in the stateliest mansions in town. *Judaei in optimo loci situ habitare solebant,* according to the testimony of an old chronicler of Frankfort. Also, they chaffered peacefully with their Christian fellow-traders under the shadow of St. Bartholomew's Church until 1462, when the town authorities were reminded by Emperor Frederick III. that their presence within the asylum of the Bishop's cathedral was an insult to the faith. The Emperor's remonstrance was prompted by the clergy and after some wavering was heeded by the town council. A row of rude dwellings was hastily erected upon a place without the old city walls appropriately called Woolshearers' Moat, and the Jewry bidden to withdraw thither and thenceforward to abide there. For having removed the alien unbelievers from a spot where they could daily see the ceremonies of the Christian Church (*"unde quasi continue videre potuerunt cerimonias"*) their Worships were praised by Pope Pius II.[9] the same, whose *sbirri* drove the Jews of Rome by force of arms every Saturday afternoon into a Christian Church, there to be preached to by a monk for the salvation of their souls.

The Jews henceforth confined within a ghetto did not own its soil—they were lessees of the town council which had built habitations in Jews' Lane at the expense of their future residents. "It is thus that the council owns the ground on which Jews' Lane stands. The gates of the ghetto, which were very strong and lined with iron, were kept closed every Sunday and saint's day, as also upon the days when the Emperor entered the city. The Jews were enjoined not to show themselves in public, nor to pass by any church. If business brought them to the Town Hall, they were not allowed to enter by the main door but by a small door from behind. The men were compelled to wear a yellow patch about the size of a crown piece upon their garments, and the women blue stripes to their veils. They were also enjoined to make room for other citizens on the pavement, and not to touch any of the articles in the market. They were not allowed to buy fish before

a certain hour of the day, nor to hire Christians as servants. The council consented to dispense with their wearing the distinguishing cap on payment of a fine of 250 florins, but they were compelled to have either a black or a grey hat. They were forbidden to lend money to minors or to women, or to sell new clothes. . . . These minute regulations, together with many more of a similar nature, were read out every year in the Synagogue. Age did not whither nor custom stale their wonderful variety. The Jews' Statutes of 1616 were still in force when Kleber's canons battered in the ghetto doors of Frankfort in 1796. Also, they were among the earliest infamies resurrected by a triumphant reaction after Napoleon's overthrow in 1814. Among other details, they barred the public sidewalks to the Jews, compelling them to walk in the middle of the road. They allowed them four physicians and no more, to minister to their sick—in the seventeenth century—and stuck to that limitation anno 1830, the Jewish community having in the meantime trebled in number. When tobacco came into general acceptance, they were forbidden the use of it outdoors. If more than two were seen walking abreast, the police impounded their hats![10] These bars to free locomotion—together with the rest of the Jews' Statutes—were put up in 1616. They were reinforced and newly proclaimed against trespassers in 1756 and again in 1765.[11] Jewesses were forbidden, under heavy penalties, to wear velvet, or holiday dress of more than one color or of material costing more than two dollars per yard, or silk on work-a-days. Nor were men suffered, under the like heavy penalties, to wear gilt or silver buttons or peruques, blond or white, in an age when false hair was universally in use among the reputable part of the population. An intensely gregarious race was cut to the quick by an ordinance restricting the number of wedding guests. The opportunity to exceed this maximum was lessened by another ordinance restricting to a dozen couples the permissible number of Jewish marriages within a twelvemonth. To this maximum number of licensed marriages the council still adhered in 1830, what time the Jewish population amounted to some five thousand souls. The town council of Frankfort also saved into the nineteenth century

another relic of the seventeenth called the Jews' Oath or *juramentum more Judaico,* an especial formula imposed upon Jewish suitors or defendants in court which run in part as follows: "If I make false avowal may brimstone and sulphur pour down upon me as it poured down upon Sodom and Gomorrah. If I make false avowal, may I sink into the earth as did Dathan and Abiram. May I turn into a pillar of salt, like unto the wife of Lott. May measles and leprosy strike me as they did strike Naeman and Miriam, the sister of Moses. May gout and epilepsy befall me, may my body be accursed and my soul never rest in the bosom of Abraham our father." [13] On the strength of such evidence, posterity will perhaps agree with Ludwig Boerne, greatest of sons of the Frankfort Ghetto, who called its statutes "a romance of wicked ill-will."

VI.

The most damning evidence of this wicked ill-will, however, were not the regulations of the Lane, but Jews' Lane itself in all its accusatory hideousness. Into this narrow Lane, incapable of adequate extension, the increase of population pressed and crowded a swarming mass of humanity, 453 families in 1612, 505 in 1709, 6,630 heads in 1773, until late in the eighteenth century the imminent dread of pestilence wrested from an inhuman magistracy some slight concessions, such as the privilege granted to the prisoners of the Lane to take their exercise on the town walls and the adding of an annex to the Lane. That thrift was made of every such concession, goes without saying. The Jews had to pay for the privilege of taking their exercise on the city walls as well as for the tearing down of a dead wall obstructing the free passage of air.

Around the third quarter of the eighteenth century, Jews' Lane in Frankfort had become, in the language of Boerne, "the worst congested spot in Continental Europe." Around the same time it had furthermore become an international scandal, like the Bastille and the Spanish Inquisition. Travelers reported it to their

countrymen in amazement. The French gazettes brought impressive descriptions of its filth, its misery, the skin-diseases which it bred and spread, the loathsome and insulting painting on the town wall near its terminal, which the council twice refused to obliterate or erase, with other details apt to arouse public sentiment. A "celebrated British traveler" (Arthur Young ?) gave an anonymous account of the Lane which made such a stir in Europe that it caused the magistrate of Frankfort to answer (anonymously) in a counterblast of denial.

In such a street, under such surroundings and legal restraints, in such an atmosphere of municipal obscurantism and heaped oppression, the Rothschilds of Herr Roessler's play were born and reared. In their early youth, anno 1796, the Lane was shot to pieces by General Kleber, when the French Revolution, a friend of mankind in a stern disguise, thundered at the doors of the old imperial city. One hundred and forty houses on Jews' Lane were destroyed by the bombardment, but the Lane was rebuilt and the Jews reimprisoned, after some years of an interim during which Jews and Christians freely commingled under common shelter. There was a temporary spell of emancipation during the Napoleonic regime. The very instant the burgher municipality of Frankfort emerged from under the yoke of Napoleon, it pounced upon the liberated Jews, subjecting them again to the *Staetligkeit* of Emperor Matthias.

In the midst of this gloom of 1815 and after, the Rothschilds walked as privileged persons. They were the only people in Jews' Lane owning the ground their family mansion stood on. In cast of character, they were genuine Frankforters as well as Jews. It is a strange but indisputable fact, that Gentile and Jew in Frankfort, in spite of artificial sunderings, have modified each other to such a degree as to exchange some traits of character and speech. The common speech of the Gentile population of Frankfort is derided by the rest of Germany as a sort of Jewish jargon. It has a specifically Jewish rhythm and intonation, and is plentifully interspersed with Hebrew locutions. If the Frankforters are Judaizing in their love of commerce and their wonted manner of speech,

the Jews of Frankfort, in the course of centuries, assumed some local traits of character which they share with their Christian compatriots. Foremost among them ranks a certain purposefulness—a steely consistency of will which loves to hide itself in social intercourse under a superficies of easy-going joviality. Among the *arriveurs* of America in every walk of life the type is sufficiently frequent to be familiar to the public. Seest thou a German-American diligent in his business? The odds are heavy he comes from Frankfort.

Of such were the Rothschilds of Herr Roessler's play, *viri tenaces propositi,* holding on like grim death, not only to their business traditions, but to their religion as well, our playwright's light-hearted little fiction of a proposed match between a daughter of the Rothschilds and a Christian ruler notwithstanding.[14] I have endeavored here, as far as a scanty measure of space allowed, to sketch the setting in which they had to fight their battles. By way of postscript, I desire to correct an error of rather wide currency, which Herr Roessler seems to share: the Rothschilds were by no means the first Jewish house ennobled by a German Emperor. In 1822 the nobilitation of wealthy Jews was already a commonplace of German high life. The first German Jew ever ennobled was a contemporary and financial confederate of Wallenstein during the Thirty Years' War—one Bassevi, surnamed von Treuenberg, which is to say "Mount-o' Faith."

NOTES

1. Prof. Werner Sombart, in *"Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben."*

2. Cp. *"Zeitschrift fuer die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland,"* I. 191 et seg.

3. As to the early commercial greatness of Frankfort-on-the-Main, *vide "Beitraege zur Wirtschafts—und Sozialgeschichte der Reichsstadt Frankfurt,"* Lips. 1906. Luther, in 1521, calls the commerce of Frankfort "a main-current of gold fed by many rivers."

4. Regarding the divorcement of the Jews from the soil and their compulsory preoccupation with barren shifts of finance, cp. the profoundly pathetic plaint of R. Salman Zevi, as quoted by Johann Jacob Schudt, in "Juedische Merkwuerdigkeiten," Frankf. & Lips, 1715, vol. I. L. VI. 184:

"Nos miselli paulo plus sumimus quam Christiani solent, ipsamque saepe sortem cum usura amittimus, maximis oneribus et vectigalibus pressi et ab exercenda omni negotiatione abstinere jussi. . . . In toto mundo nihil melius est usura quam Tellus reddere solet. Rusticus medimnum frumenti agro mandat, et triginta ex eo metit, victumque habet certum, suasque vaccas, vitulos, butyrum, farinam, lac, carnem, gallinas, anseres, et quidquid facto usus est: Nos vero pauperculi agriculturam non habemus, nec spes ulla eam consequendi affulget: Sed expectandum nobis est, num ab alio quid emere queamus, . . . ejus quidem loco foenus agitare permissum nobis est. At nil nisi odium apud Christianos parit nobis haec licentia, ac immanes gravesque inimicitias, ut omnino optarim,

licitum nobis esse agrum colere, omnemque negotiationem exercere: promti enim et lubentes a foenore abstineremus, quod in summa nos saepe conjicit pericula, solumque vertere ejubet: imo ipsa sors et usura saepissime pereunt, argentoque nostro multoties emungimur, quae discrimina cuncta rustico non metuenda sunt, cuius res ac fortunae tutiori in loco positae manent: nec enim arva aut jugera ejus auferri possunt. *Existimo autem prorsus, hac ipsa licentia foenus exercendi insidias nobis structas esse, tamquam muribus lardo, ut capti in vinculas facilius compelleremur . . . et foenus quidem ipsum nihil aliud est, quam execratio et maledictio in Lege, quod multam nobis conciliat invidiam, rixas, perpetuasque lites.*"

5. Cp. *Beitraege,* etc., p. 74 et seg.; also Schudt, l. c. "Von der Frankfurter Juden Handthierung und Gewerb."

6. Of 1509. *Beitraege,* p. 74.

7. "Two men," in colloquial old Italian, were "due Christiani." "Honest" (*ehrlich*) and "Christian" (*christlich*) were interchangeable terms in old German usage. Cp. in Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen* the soldier's admonition to the innkeeper, to give honest (*christliche*) measure. For a curious English vulgarism along the same lines, cp. that passage in Oliver Twist, where a dog of well-nigh human intelligence is spoken of as "almost a Christian." When "human beings" in general are referred to in Russian peasant speech, they are spoken of (to this day) as "orthodox believers."

8. In Frankfort, the ancient coronation city of the German Emperors, the Jews, during the coronation festivities, were not allowed to leave the Lane. As for their exclusion from taverns and stews, cp. Schudt, l. c. I. L. VI. Ch. XVIII.

9. In a bull dated Oct. 7th, 1460, reproduced in Lersner's *Chronik*, etc., I. 812.

10. Dr. I. Kracauer, *Geschichte der Judengasse,* etc., p. 417.

11. *Ibid,* p. 417 et seq.
12. *Ibid,* p. 425 et seq.
13. *Juden-Staettigkeit* of 1705, p. 9.
14. Cp. *The Rothschilds,* by John Reeves, London, 1887.

The Five Frankforters

ACT I.

Sitting room of FRAU GUDULA'S *old family mansion in Frankfort-on-the-Main. Heavy, massive furniture suggestive of the baroque. Every individual item bears witness to the loving discrimination that acquired and the care that preserved it. On the walls good paintings of the Seekatz times—also a French Landscape of the Claude Lorraine school. At the deep Dutch window through which the dingy old houses of Jew's Lane are visible, a sewing table, and in front of it an easy chair,* FRAU GUDULA'S *favorite seat. In the corner a spinet.*

ROSE, *the old housekeeper, and* LIZZIE, *a housemaid in her teens.*

ROSE

(*at the linen press, counting*)

Seventeen, eighteen—there, take the table-napkins and place one with every cover.

LIZZIE

How many are coming?

ROSE

Don't ask, little silly. One never knows in this house. There will be another family gathering and a few guests.

LIZZIE

What guests?

ROSE

How should I know? Maybe the Leather-Wolf of Swamp Alley, maybe an archbishop, or possibly His Highness the Landgrave of Hesse.

LIZZIE

The Landgrave—to us in Jew's Lane?

ROSE

I should like to have a florin for every visit he has paid us. He and his father. He often called when old Meyer Amschel was alive. At this table they were sitting until midnight, playing chess and drinking Hock. And *matzeh* and macaroons they ate. The Landgrave's coach was always kept waiting around the corner, because our Jew's Lane is too narrow for driving.

LIZZIE

That such a wealthy lady should bide in such a smelly old lane!

ROSE

You don't understand. The Herr Consul, the oldest of our five boys, bought her a house in the *Fahrgass,* with a garden bigger and finer than his own. But our old Frau Gudula wouldn't put up there.

LIZZIE

Just fancy! And the house stands empty now?

ROSE

That's where you don't know our Meyer Amschel. He sold it to the city of Frankfort—and a handsome penny he made on the deal.

(*A knock at the door.*)

(*Enter* COURT-JEWELER BOEL, *a stout man in his latter fifties. He carries a plate-box and a jewel-case.*)

BOEL

Good morning, Miss Rose. I am bringing back the things myself. Too risky for me to trust a young man with such valuables. Where is your mistress?

ROSE

In the synagogue.

BOEL

On a work-a-day?

ROSE

It's the anniversary of her father *selig*.

BOEL

Sure, old Schnapper in his little coin-shop never dreamt that his daughter would once eat off a golden service. (*He places a case on the table.*) There, now! Never handled in my life another service like this one.

ROSE

I should think not! It's a present of the King of Denmark—as a token, because the old Herr Meyer Amschel once helped him out with a couple of millions, else the King simply would have had to shut up his Kingdom.

(*A ring is heard.*)

ROSE

Go, Lizzie, and see who it is.

(*Exit* LIZZIE.)

BOEL

There is that new emerald-set—I had to fit a new lock to it.

ROSE

Madam has already been inquiring.

BOEL

Did she? I didn't know there was any hurry. What's up now?

ROSE

Must be something grand—couriers are coming twice every hour. Herr Nathan from London is already in town. The other sons are due to-day, or else to-morrow.

BOEL

Where do all these gentlemen keep themselves?

ROSE

Herr Nathan in London, Herr Carl in Naples, Salomon in Vienna, and little Jacob lives in Paris now and is called Jacques—our boys are everywhere. And *what* boys they are! The least of 'em is a court banker. One is a consul, the other a consul-general——

(JACOB, *the youngest of the Rothschilds, enters through the middle and overhears* ROSE'S *last words. He is a tall, good-looking lad, somewhat weary despite his twenty-eight years. In his manners he has had the best inward and outward training of London and Paris. He is dressed with inconspicuous care, and, like his brothers, strives to efface whatever little there appears of Jewish traits in his outward aspect.*)

JACOB

Rose, will you ever leave off bragging?

ROSE

Our Master Jacob!

JACOB

(*patting her*)

Well, old Rose, still good at gabbing. How's your health?

ROSE

Fair enough, Master Jacob, only the eyes are giving way.

JACOB

Where is mother?

ROSE

Due home any minute.

JACOB

Good day, Mr. Boel.

BOEL

Your servant, Herr Jacob.

JACOB

How is business?

BOEL

Patrons like you are lacking.

JACOB

Aye, to be sure, you were the first I ever ran in debt with.

BOEL

A matter of a little diamond bracelet—a present, you told me, for your little sister——

JACOB

But a little French actress got it—with a little poem.

BOEL

You have grown since a proper young gentleman.

JACOB

I am still presenting bracelets to the French actresses, only the poems I have outgrown.

ROSE

(*listening*)

There's the old lady a-coming.

JACOB

(*seating himself in a corner*)

Don't tell I am here, Rose.

(FRAU GUDULA *enters. A seventy-year old matron of stately carriage. Traces of beauty in the withered face. In her eyes now and then a flicker of youth. Her hands are delicate and slender. She is attired in dark silk, is sparingly and inconspicuously bejeweled and wears a lace cap, under which a few white ringlets are protruding. In her hand she carries a prayer-book and reticule.*)

(ROSE *leaves, after relieving her mistress.*)

GUDULA

(*to* BOEL, *without noticing* JACOB)

Good day, Herr Boel.

BOEL

Mrs. Court-Banker, I brought your valuables—everything has been cleaned and examined.

GUDULA

How much is your bill?

BOEL

Seven florins, if you please.

GUDULA

Go to my son in the *Fahrgass*—he will see you paid.

(*A nod of dismissal.*)

BOEL

Your servant, Mrs. Court-Banker.

(*Exit.*)

(GUDULA *locks up the jewelry in the chest.*)

JACOB

(*who smilingly watched her*)

Well, Mother, it seems you won't notice me!

GUDULA

My little Jacob! Good God, how you startled me! Why, lad, what art doing here?

JACOB

Just sitting and waiting for my mother.

GUDULA

(*pats him on the hand, then kisses him upon both cheeks and on his forehead; smiling*)

Those bairns of mine! If you think one in Paris, he is snuggling at home in a corner, another is supposed to be in Naples, all of a sudden, a courier arrives from Aschaffenburg with the message of his coming. Little Jacob, my child! (*Kissing him.*) How long have you been in Frankfort?

JACOB

Five minutes.

GUDULA

And you went straight to your mother? That's right and proper. Where do you put up?

JACOB

At Amschel's in the *Fahrgass*. I haven't been there as yet. Just sent my valet with the baggage.

GUDULA

You must be famished.

(*Pulls the bell-rope. Enter* ROSE.)

GUDULA

Rose! Bring coffee for the young Master, and butter, and those saffron loaves he fancies.

(ROSE *off.*)

GUDULA

There now, sit beside me in the light, where I can see how you look. You have grown again. A little pale you are looking.

JACOB

Just weariness of travel.

GUDULA

(*pressing him into a big armchair*)

There, now you are comfortably seated. Do you want another cushion? (JACOB *smilingly suffers her attentions.*) Do you live a proper life in Paris? I often have my fears. In truth, I don't like my boys to be cast about among strangers. The girls, too, have left me, all marrying into foreign parts. They, too, don't belong to me any more, and yet, I should have loved to gather my children around me. How do you live in Paris, little Jacob?

JACOB

Plenty of work and a good deal of pleasure, on 'Change and in the counting-room by day, in the evening theatre, and concerts and society.

GUDULA

And when do you rest?

JACOB

Truth to tell, only when I am traveling.

GUDULA

That is no manner of life, my child. You need the care of a woman.

JACOB

Come you with me to Paris, Mother!

GUDULA

Little Jacob, I am an old woman, I bide liefest at home or in Amschel's garden.

JACOB

Did you come just now from Amschel?

GUDULA

I came from synagogue. It is the anniversary of my father *selig.* (*Smiling.*) Mind, little Jacob, I love to go to synagogue. That's something for old folks. It's so beautifully still, there one may dream. In the corner my father sat, there stands the chair of my dead husband. There they chanted over him the prayer for the dead. And they will do as much for me one of these days.

(ROSE *enters with coffee and refreshments.*)

GUDULA

Don't stir, little Jacob, I'll pour for you. Plenty of milk, eh? Shall I spread you a roll?

JACOB

Thank you, Mother. On coming home to you, one feels like a little boy come home from school.

GUDULA

You haven't been home for a long time. Nearly two years agone. How long will you bide this time?

JACOB

That I don't know, Mother; I don't even know on what errand I came. Salomon has sent me a message through an express courier to drop everything and come at once.

GUDULA

Nathan, too, came from London the other night on the same short notice. Neither he nor Amschel know what's in the air.

JACOB

I suppose Carl is expected likewise to come from Naples.

GUDULA

Yes, I received word of his coming from Aschaffenburg.

JACOB

Some big business must be afoot.

GUDULA

Does another King need money? Well, if he's respectable and to be trusted, he may have it.

JACOB

In general, I believe there is a good deal to be talked over between the five of us.

GUDULA

That is a blessed custom of yours to gather under father's roof at every weighty turn.

JACOB

I have brought you a little keepsake, Mother. (*Hands her a small package.*)

GUDULA

You shouldn't spend so much money on an old woman. What is it this time? (*Opens the parcel.*)

JACOB

Old Brussels laces.

GUDULA

How wonderfully dainty they are! And whence might they come from?

JACOB

They are over a hundred years old. They are said to be an erstwhile heirloom of the Countess Palatine of Speyer.

GUDULA

My mother's kinsfolk are from Speyer. My grandfather perchance had to jump into the ditch when the Countess Palatine rode past with her courtiers, and now I am to wear her laces. These be strange times, little Jacob.

(MEYER AMSCHEL, *a big man, end of the forties, inclined to stoutness, leisurely in his movements, shrewd eyes, very circumspect, his fine clothes showing traces of carelessness. His somewhat noisy joviality is not always wholly genuine.*)

MEYER AMSCHEL

Why, there is our Benjamin! How do you do, little Jacob! (*They kiss.*) Well, Mother, are you happy? Well, Jacob, are you called now James or Jacques?

JACOB

Always Jacob for domestic use.

AMSCHEL

In every land you shape your name after the manner of the country. In London, you have been James, in Paris, Monsieur Jacques.

JACOB

I can't require the Parisians to call me little Jacob. You have easy talking. You are snugly staying at home in Frankfort, bearing father's old name.

AMSCHEL

To carry a name like Meyer Amschel, do you call that a joke?

JACOB

At any rate, my Parisian task is the harder one, for in Paris I have to find a reputation for the name.

AMSCHEL

And I must maintain one here.

JACOB

You are the chief of the clan and all the honors are coming your way. Since I saw you last you have become Bavarian Consul. My sincere felicitations.

AMSCHEL

Not at all. Formerly only my co-religionists wrote me begging letters, now all Bavaria has joined the schnorring procession. On those terms, I have supped on titles and dignities. I need my money for other things.

GUDULA

Not so, you are rejoicing over every bit of ribbon.

AMSCHEL

(*comfortably stroking his portly stomach*)

No use for additional ones. No more shelf-room, you know. My friend, the Landgrave of Hesse, digged me between the ribs the other day and said: "Amschel, you must get a little stouter or there won't be any room for the Grand Cordon I mean to give you." The Duke of Fulda heard it and went off into a scream.

GUDULA

Are you bragging again with your grand acquaintances?

AMSCHEL

Mother, every handshake of a sovereign means cash. (*Takes a slice of a roll.*) I don't know, Mother, how it is, my wife has all your recipes and yet, for a truly tasty meal I have to come to you.

JACOB

(*smiling*)

Your appetite is still good, I see.

AMSCHEL

At forty-seven dinner is the only substantial pleasure left. Mother made a bean soup the other day, something to dream about. You may search all Paris and won't find such perfection. (*Eating.*)

GUDULA

(*smiling*)

Herr Consul, don't gorge!

JACOB

Let him, if he likes it.

AMSCHEL

This is the house where things are to my relish. It's the snuggest house in all Frankfort.

JACOB

And yet you live elsewhere!

AMSCHEL

Well, it ain't just the place. I have to represent a great house. And as for my wife,—have you, perhaps, the courage to tell her to live in Jew's Lane?

JACOB

How is your wife?

AMSCHEL

My darling Emma is sitting in the garden, doing nothing and thinking up something to quarrel about with me in the evening.

GUDULA

Your wife has not enough employment.

JACOB

A wife's rightful occupation are her children.

AMSCHEL

You won't tease me much longer, in the spring I'll send her to Franzensbad. What's a home without a child?

GUDULA

I, too, shouldn't object to a little Meyer Amschel.

AMSCHEL

I'd build a new synagogue, if I knew for a certainty that it would help. Salomon, at least, has a daughter.

(*Enter* NATHAN, AMSCHEL'S *junior by one year, attired with British neatness of detail. He has acquired in London a stiffly correct carriage. Also he has been taught there that there are better profits in listening than in talking.*)

NATHAN

Good day, Mother! (*Kisses her hand. To* JACOB:) Good day, brother! (*Kisses his cheek, nods a salute to* AMSCHEL.) Have you had fair traveling? (*Without waiting for an answer, to his Mother*:) Did any courier's mail arrive for me?

GUDULA

Not yet.

NATHAN

(*to* JACOB)

On what date did Salomon agree to meet you in Frankfort?

JACOB

On the seventeenth.

NATHAN

Did he inform you of the purpose of this gathering?

JACOB

He only mentioned some affair of weight.

NATHAN

That goes without saying. Else there would be no occasion for such an abrupt by-play. Really now, Salomon has a little disposition to lord it over us, I find.

GUDULA

So far he always did the right thing at the right time.

NATHAN

I am not belittling his talents, Mother, nor do I deny that the resolves born of our gatherings have always advanced the interests of our house. This time, however, I have been ordered

abroad at a very inconvenient moment. I have been negotiating with the East Indian Company to assume one of their monopolies. We'll talk about it after Salomon's and Carl's arrival. How are your affairs in Paris?

JACOB

I am making headway slowly.

NATHAN

No matter. Your chief aim must be to take firm root in the soil by unimpeachable solidity. You must rest content for years with small transactions, mark time, impress people as an indifferent observer, keep a keen eye on all chances and then, when the great moment comes, concentrate all your energies,—never you fear, we all support you; follow your opportunity, heedless of petty considerations, in grand style, and then—(*searching for the right word, in a sudden outburst*) grab!!

AMSCHEL

One must have the right scent!

NATHAN

(*very politely*)

Pardon me, my age gives me the prerogative of instruction——

JACOB

(*smiling*)

I have heard all this often enough, but am by no means loath to hear it once again. One necessary detail, however, you forgot to mention: good luck!

NATHAN

My dear Jacob, good luck and ill-fortune are concepts of hucksters; ill-fortune is a foolish synonym for miscalculation. On what terms are you with the Government?

JACOB

The Premier calls me his *jeune ami allemand* and the Minister of Finance has shown me much politeness from the very outset.

NATHAN

Our family has never had occasion to complain about lack of politeness on the part of Ministers of Finance.

JACOB

He has been lately progressing daily in cordiality. I am scenting a new Government loan.

AMSCHEL

There are no stable Governments in France; every little moment there is another King.

NATHAN

A loan? Oh, yes, one might make sentiment for it on 'Change.

GUDULA

Won't you have luncheon, Nathan, dear? You haven't had as yet a meal in your father's house.

NATHAN

(*consulting his watch*)

Thank you, Mother—in the evening. We must go on 'Change now. Come, Jacob.

JACOB

Nothing stirring on 'Change around this hour. I think I'll stay at home.

NATHAN

Only come for a moment. It's meet they should see us together on 'Change. That will serve as a reminder of our solidarity. Adieu, Mother! (*Exit.*)

AMSCHEL

(*Taking* JACOB'S *arm*)

A whole hour in Frankfort and not as yet on 'Change—that won't do. Come, little Jacob! (*Marches him off.*)

(FRAU GUDULA *seats herself at her sewing table. Enter* ROSE.)

ROSE

If you please, Madam, who are going to dine with us to-day?

GUDULA

I think all the boys will be here in the evening. Every one shall find his favorite dish at his father's table. As for Amschel, he must have carp with sauce Polonaise.

ROSE

That he shall have.

GUDULA

A stewed steak for Salomon—but mince it before serving, he has a habit of bolting his food. You must get some goose liver with apple sauce for Nathan; that's what he fancies most.

ROSE

And for Master Carl?

GUDULA

Carl must get something out of the common—they spoiled him in Italy; you had better prepare him a roast chicken. And my little Jacob? (*Smiling.*) Have you any passover flour left?

ROSE

Yes, ma'am.

GUDULA

Then make him a *metzeh* pudding. He can't get that in Paris.

(*Enter* LIZZIE.)

LIZZIE

Madam, there is a strange young lady outdoors. She wants to see you the worst way.

GUDULA

I know. (*Opening her purse.*) To-day my little Jacob came home—let others have their satisfaction too. Just hand her this gold piece!

LIZZIE

Not this one—she ain't that sort. She looks like a little princess. A big coach is in waiting for her around the corner.

GUDULA

Well, we are used to all sorts. Show her in. (*Exit* LIZZIE.) Rose, put my lace kerchief straight.

(*Enter* CHARLOTTE, *a beautiful girl of twenty, in traveling attire, topped by a magnificent hat. She curtsies deeply before* GUDULA. ROSE *likewise curtseying, off.*)

GUDULA

I take it kind of a young lady to call on an old woman in this narrow lane.

CHARLOTTE

I have been here once before—but then I was a little mite, three years of age.

GUDULA

I am afraid my memory fails me.

CHARLOTTE

But I—I didn't forget you,—just as you are I kept your likeness in my mind, with all the little wrinkles, set in a frame of lace —only in my memory you loomed bigger. And there on this chair my grandfather sat.

GUDULA

And who was he?

CHARLOTTE

(*smiling*)

Old Meyer Amschel.

GUDULA

Why, it's my Salomon's little Lottie!

CHARLOTTE

(*kissing her hand*)

Grannie!

GUDULA

(*kisses her*)

But, child, what wind is blowing you hither?

CHARLOTTE

I came with papa.

GUDULA

Is he in Frankfort?

CHARLOTTE

He just went on 'Change.

GUDULA

My little Jacob first went to his mother and *then* on 'Change.

CHARLOTTE

(*apologetically*)

You see, our entire journey did not carry us through a town with an exchange. He was simply dying for a whiff of the stock markets.

GUDULA

And all this long journey he dragged you in his train?

CHARLOTTE

I was glad of the ride. Traveling is such good fun, save that nothing can be speedy enough to suit father. He has been in a fidget all the way.

GUDULA

What is doing?

CHARLOTTE

I don't know, but it must be something pleasant. I never saw father so well pleased before. Grannie, may I stay with you?

GUDULA

And welcome a thousand times, my child—if only poor quarters will do you, my little princess. Where is your baggage?

CHARLOTTE

In the fond of the coach, Grannie. Also I have a maid with me.

GUDULA

(*ringing*)

Won't your father put up here?

CHARLOTTE

He has taken lodgings in the Swan.

(*Enter* LIZZIE.)

GUDULA

Lizzie, see to the baggage. Let Rose tidy up our guest-room. Missy will bide with us. Put up her maid in the room next to yours. (*Exit* LIZZIE.)

CHARLOTTE

There is another big trunk on top of father's traveling coach.

GUDULA

You travel with two coaches? Why, the Landgrave of Hesse is content with one!

CHARLOTTE

It's on account of all the new dresses father gave me for the journey.

GUDULA

Well, he wants to make the most of his beautiful child, nor do I blame him, feeling proud of my pretty grandchild myself.

CHARLOTTE

He gave me a robe of state made of white satin, with gold embroidery and laces.

"First you will bide awhile with your Grannie"

GUDULA

Bless me, when I was your age my robe of state was just a flowered print. But take your hat off; let me help you.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you, Grannie!

GUDULA

A robe of state for such a young thing—what will it profit you in Frankfort?

CHARLOTTE

I'm sure I can't tell. Father is acting mysteriously—perhaps we are going on to some other town.

GUDULA

First you will bide a while with your Grannie. Wait a moment and I will look after the guest-room. My old Rose is not used to such grand visitors. (*Exit.*)

(CHARLOTTE, *left alone, seats herself at the spinet and plays the aria of Rosina from "The Barber of Seville."*)

(JACOB, *entering, halts at the threshold in surprise.* CHARLOTTE, *perceiving him, interrupts her playing.*)

JACOB

Pray go on playing, demoiselle. The old house hasn't listened to music for ever so long.

CHARLOTTE

The dear old house! I find that music befits it very well.

JACOB

The spinet has been mute for years. I have been the last, I believe, who played it.

CHARLOTTE

I don't perform before musical people—they are likely to find me out. (*Rising.*)

JACOB

Pray go on! You positively beautify that old spinet. Play on, please; after the clamor of the stock market, music is doubly soothing.

CHARLOTTE

It's a difficult opus.

JACOB

Rosinni's, I believe.

CHARLOTTE

Could you recognize him through my strumming?

JACOB

Yes—admiringly.

CHARLOTTE

He has many enemies, but I adore him.

JACOB

I'll tell the young maestro that a beautiful demoiselle in Frankfort adores him.

CHARLOTTE

You know him?

JACOB

He is my friend and a frequent guest at my house in Paris.

CHARLOTTE

You live in Paris, then? And are Paris bankers on a friendly footing with artists?

JACOB

You know me?

CHARLOTTE

To be sure! You are Frau Gudula's little Jacob.

JACOB

And who is the charming demoiselle at the spinet?

CHARLOTTE

I have guessed you; it's your turn now.

JACOB

You are not a Frankforter?

CHARLOTTE

Right. But who do you think I am?

JACOB

At my mother's house only people of substance are calling. On the street I might have possibly taken you for an actress.

CHARLOTTE

Flattering—but wrong.

JACOB

Then you must be a lady of fashion, honoring my mother with her visit—a Countess, belike.

CHARLOTTE

But I may be one of your kinsfolk.

JACOB

They look differently.

CHARLOTTE

(*curtseying*)

Thank you.

GUDULA

(*entering*)

Well, little Jacob, what say you to our visitor?

CHARLOTTE

Monsieur doesn't know aright whether to take me for an actress or a countess.

GUDULA

Jacob! Why, this is Salomon's little Lottie from Vienna.

CHARLOTTE

Who knows what else Monsieur might have put me down for if Grannie hadn't come betimes.

GUDULA

That's no Monsieur. It's your uncle. Have conduct, girl, and give him a kiss, as is right and proper.

CHARLOTTE

Uncle, I daresay, won't care; he is used to another style of ladies in Paris.

GUDULA

What manner of speech is this for a young girl! In my time one offered one's cheek and blushed.

JACOB

At any rate, you might shake hands.

CHARLOTTE

Gladly. I'd be friends with you. I should love to go to Paris. You shall show me the town then.

JACOB

I fear they wouldn't believe me my beautiful niece.

GUDULA

How do you fancy your new uncle?

CHARLOTTE

He has little of father—takes more after you, Grannie.

GUDULA

(*to* JACOB)

Did you meet Salomon on 'Change?

JACOB

He was just flitting past, you know his way—we hardly spoke. But Carl has come. There, they are coming, true to time.

(*Enter* AMSCHEL, NATHAN, CARL.)

(CARL, *middle of the thirties, looks somewhat more pronouncedly Jewish than the other four brothers—to his evident chagrin. His attire is rich and very showy, being patterned, in an overdone fashion, on that of the Italian nobility of Rome and Naples. He attempts now and then to attitudinize, but to little purpose.*)

CARL

Mother! (*Embraces her.*)

GUDULA

(*kisses him*)

Carl, my boy! (*Sniffing.*) You smell of scent.

CARL

Appropriately enough—here in Jew's Lane. We had to run the gauntlet. The *schnorrers* absolutely mobbed us. The entire *Gass* we had at our heels; there was a crowd of gapers at every window.

GUDULA

It's a rare sight to them, to see the sons of Meyer Amschel foregather. How goes it with you?

CARL

(*would like to say "middling," remembers in time that the word lacks distinction, and says instead*)

Cosi, cosi! My nerves are always troubling me. This calling of ours is full of excitement—it's too much of a strain! And then the endless journey from Naples hither. And one doesn't even know what for. It's too vexatious for anything.

GUDULA

You are vexed at every trifle.

CARL

How are you, Mother?

GUDULA

Too well to wish for better things. I live at peace in my little house.

CARL

To be sure the house is snug enough, but on too humble a footing for our mother.

GUDULA

I lack nothing.

CARL

Our mother should have a beautiful mansion in an exclusive neighborhood.

AMSCHEL

That's exactly what I bought for her, but she would have none of it.

GUDULA

No, no, old furniture must not be moved. Besides, this is a house of good report, and I'm afraid that luck will turn on my children if I turn my back on the house.

NATHAN

There is commonsense in Carl's proposal. One must consider public opinion. There is no lack of aristocratic mansions in the market—at reasonable prices——

GUDULA

(*very energetically*)

In this house I lived with your father many years in all happiness. In this house I gave birth to all my children; here I mourned for my good Amschel—I won't budge.

CARL

Then take at least a man-servant—it looks so *pauvre* to have only old Rose answer the bell.

GUDULA

I will have no footman in my house. It won't do for an old Jewess.

(*The noise of children laughing and romping in the lane is heard.*)

CARL

(*nervously*)

What on earth is this frightful alley up to now?

CHARLOTTE

(*at the window, laughing*)

Father stands at the porch throwing pennies to the children.

GUDULA

That just looks like my son Salomon.

CARL

And to think that he dragged us hither from all the four corners of the globe, just to keep us waiting until he is through fooling with the gutter snipes.

(SALOMON *enters in a rush. He is two years the junior of Amschel, haggard, full of briskness and bustle. He is dressed in a dark frock-coat, resplendent with decorations. His great exemplar is Prince Metternich, whom he unconsciously attempts to copy, with indifferent results.*)

SALOMON

Good day, Mother! (*Kisses her.*) Pardon me for having kept you waiting! I had to call at the Austrian Embassy on a matter of first-rate importance. (*To his mother*:) Well, get everything ready for a two-hours' ride across country to-morrow. (*To the brothers*:) You are all coming.

AMSCHEL

You can't have convoked the entire family just for a picnic out of doors?

SALOMON

Possess your soul in peace and you will see what's at the goal of our drive. How goes it?

AMSCHEL

Well, I don't have to worry exactly about my daily bread.

SALOMON

(*surveying his portly form*)

Evidently not. Any mail for me?

(GUDULA *hands him several envelopes.*)

SALOMON

Thank you, Mother. I envy you your little house and the Lane. (*Opens the envelopes and examines their contents.*) A draft of four thousand dollars from Orenheimer, Hamburg. Thanks, I wouldn't accept for four thousand farthings over their signature. (*To Nathan:*) And how is your lordship? How is business?

NATHAN

Nothing to complain of.

SALOMON

(*reading another dispatch*)

Columbia 1200 at sixty-six and a half,—very well, I'll take that lot. Amschel, you lend me this evening a young man to take dictation. Hello, Carl! (*They shake hands.*) Strange, the older you get, the more of a Frankforter you look.

CARL

(*annoyed*)

Others don't take that view. Only the other day His Holiness the Pope told me that I'm getting completely Italianized in my looks and bearing.

"Baroness, I have the honor to hand you a patent of nobility."

SALOMON

Italianized? I see His Holiness means to borrow. Ah, Little Jacob! Well, lad, how is life in Paris? How is the frail sisterhood? And how about that French Government loan?

JACOB

I may possibly be approached shortly.

SALOMON

Possibly! The French Ambassador at Vienna has been sounding me for the last six months. Rest assured, we'll get the loan. Well, Mother, what say you to our little Lottie? Are you pleased?

CARL

Have I come all the way from Naples to hear what mother thinks of Lottie?

NATHAN

Won't you tell us at last why you put us to the trouble of coming?

SALOMON

(*beaming at his brothers with a smile of triumph*)

You seem to be curious. (*He draws a large sealed envelope from out of his breast pocket.*) What think you does it contain?

CARL

(*dryly*)

A letter, I suppose.

SALOMON

A gift for all of us! (*The brothers in their concern are crowding around* SALOMON. *To* GUDULA:) Baroness, I have the honor to hand you a patent of nobility from the Vienna Chancellor of State which raises us all to the hereditary rank of Barons.

AMSCHEL

Donnerwetter!

GUDULA

Children, my eyes are failing—I can't read.

NATHAN

Show me! (*He opens the letter, all crowd around him and look over his shoulder.*) Right. The Emperor has bestowed a Barony upon us.

CARL

My smelling salts—I am fainting. (*He reclines in a chair, lifting his flagon.*)

NATHAN

Salomon, that was a master-stroke of yours!

SALOMON

Well, Mother, what say you?

GUDULA

Children, I can't help it—it makes me laugh. Of course, I am glad for your sakes and so would have been my Amschel *selig,* but I pray you, don't get conceited, whatever you do.

CHARLOTTE

And throughout the entire journey you did not drop the slightest hint of it?

SALOMON

I do not talk about matters pending.

AMSCHEL

I am a Baron! Why didn't you tell us on 'Change within everybody's hearing?

SALOMON

Would you have me shout the news from the housetops? We'll publish the fact without noise and in a dignified manner—in keeping with our rank!

GUDULA

Little Jacob, have you nothing to say?

JACOB

I am wondering—a title more or less—does it really make much of a difference?

SALOMON

No inward difference, as we five know—it's an outward token of our station in society. You are an exacting young man.

JACOB

When I was a boy, only a little while ago, they shouted *"hep, hep"* in the Lane, right in front of our house.

NATHAN

Just so! They won't dare to do that now. I shall dispatch at once a special courier to my family in London.

CARL

And I to Naples.

SALOMON

Needless—the official communication is already on its way from Vienna to Paris, London and Naples.

NATHAN

I should have preferred to advise the London public in my own way.

SALOMON

Run along now, little Lottie, there is business to be talked over.

CHARLOTTE

Auf Wiedersehen. (*Off.*)

SALOMON

Pray Mother, you stay with us. Now that we are *en famille,* it is of course clear to all of you that we did not get this for nothing? Knighthood costs blood or money.

NATHAN

If I know our Salomon aright, he didn't shed for it any blood on the battlefield.

AMSCHEL

Let's hear the worst—what did it cost?

SALOMON

I have been making preparations for a long time, as you will readily understand. There are several expense accounts: First, entertainments and presents; secondly, a rather large sum lent to a person of high estate—which will not be repaid. Furthermore, a donation toward the building of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. The expense account will reach you. The total is pretty large——

NATHAN

Well, we are six to share in it.

JACOB

I propose we take Mother's share upon ourselves.

GUDULA

Nix—I pay my way.

CARL

The article would have been cheaper in Italy.

SALOMON

Cheapness in that line means always flimsiness. We can afford the best.

AMSCHEL

By rights the assessments ought to be graded according to age—the youngest should pay more because they will enjoy the title longer.

CARL

We'll pay in six equal shares and let it go at that.

SALOMON

There is another affair of first importance to be discussed. You all know the young Duke of Taunus?

AMSCHEL

Not personally, but I know his signature.

GUDULA

I have seen him, both child and youth, taking his airing a-horseback on the Bockenheimer highroad, a handsome, proper young man.

JACOB

He frequently visits Paris. I know him to be fond of amusement.

SALOMON

He has been my guest at Vienna. A charming cavalier—and rather attentive to my Lottie.

GUDULA

You are all looking up too high in choosing your company!

SALOMON

Well, this Duke of Taunus is deep in debt.

AMSCHEL

Meaning, he has more creditors than subjects.

SALOMON

When he came home from exile after Napoleon's abdication, he found triumphal arches but empty treasure-chests. I should think he hasn't been over-prosperous ever since—now he is trying to mend his state. He has made me overtures about a twelve-million-dollar loan.

NATHAN

How will he pay it?

SALOMON

I have been thinking of a lottery loan, the principal to be repayable in forty years.

CARL

And if he doesn't keep terms?

SALOMON

I have no intention to retain the lottery tickets—the only thing we'll hold on to will be the commission. We'll sell the tickets on 'Change, excepting, possibly, one which we'll keep under glass and frame to memorialize the transaction.

AMSCHEL

He has the reputation of a spendthrift, playing Louis the Fifteenth in his miniature castle on the Taunus.

CARL

Looks like a risky business.

NATHAN

I don't know if the investment be a proper one, if the man's a loose liver.

SALOMON

He must reform—under guarantee.

NATHAN

What guarantee?

SALOMON

A match.

NATHAN

With whom?

SALOMON

(*turning to* GUDULA)

With my daughter Lottie.

AMSCHEL

The Duke of Taunus marry your daughter! Absurd.

SALOMON

I am well aware of the difficulties in the way.

NATHAN

People will resent it. Climbing, they will call it.

SALOMON

Exactly—that's what it is. It's my fixed intention to have my family pass at par everywhere.

NATHAN

A reigning Duke your son-in-law! You are a visionary.

SALOMON

Let me remind you: thirty years ago the son of an unknown attorney came to Paris from a little island nobody had ever heard of, to conquer, first Paris, then France, then half of Europe. In this age of ours everything is possible. Mother, what say you?

GUDULA

I am afraid of you. My grandfather was a packman in Neustadt on the Taunus. There he made the rounds, laden with his bundles—and that's where my granddaughter is to drive as duchess in her coach? (*Roughly.*) No, I'll have no hand in this! Do what you like, but leave me out of the game. (*Goes off.*)

(*A pause of embarrassed silence.*)

AMSCHEL

We'll consider the matter overnight.

SALOMON

I have considered. To-morrow morning I am going to drive with Lottie to Neustadt Castle. You may come if you like.

NATHAN

We must think—we must think. Come Carl and Amschel!

SALOMON

Bide a while, Jacob! (*Takes the chessboard from the drawer. The three others withdraw rearward, where they converse in undertones.*)

SALOMON

I must have a little diversion. Let's play a game of chess.

JACOB

(*taking a chair*)

Salomon, you are unmindful; the happiness of your daughter is at stake.

SALOMON

She likes him well enough. And then, "happiness"—*was heisst das?* She may live happy with a prince and unhappy with a clerk, also she might live happy with a clerk and unhappy with a prince—you can't reduce happiness to figures. (*He settles in his chair and says with a touch of comfortable self-derision*:) Had I not been made a Baron a quarter of an hour ago, I'd say: You are *meschugge*.

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

The ducal castle-grounds of Neustadt-on-the-Taunus, laid out in the style of Versailles. The hedges are evenly trimmed, in the baskets roses are in flower, the rearward vista discloses the arbored walks of the castle. The curtain rises over MADAM DE ST. GEORGES *in a swing,* BARON SEULBERG *swinging her.* PRINCESS EVELINE *in an armchair. The young* DUKE GUSTAVE *lies réclining in a restful attitude against a grassy elevation of the sod.*

ST. GEORGES

(*a mondaine of twenty-six*)

Not so high, dear Baron, I am giddy!

GUSTAVE

(*a dandified grand seigneur of thirty, blase but not outworn*)

You swing our divinity to still loftier heights, Seulberg—I, your Sovereign, command it.

SEULBERG

An order of state which I execute right willingly, Your Highness.

ST. GEORGES

Highness, I thought you asleep?

GUSTAVE

That's where you underrate your *pater patriae.* I rest inclined against this meadow-bank to contemplate the world from the ant's perspective.

ST. GEORGES

And what do you see?

GUSTAVE

Only a tiresome stretch of blue heavens most advantageously broken by your charming personality.

ST. GEORGES

Seulberg, I implore you, not too high!

GUSTAVE

Seulberg, I command you, higher. I see the shapely limbs of the countess and think myself in heaven—or at a place more heavenly still, in Paris, at Tortonis—I am drinking sorbet, I hear the rustling of laces, I scent the odor of *lorettes*——

EVELINE

(*laughing*)

Bravo, bravo!

GUSTAVE

Do not laugh, sweet cousin, but rather look sour, in keeping with the family tradition.

EVELINE

I would like to try the swing myself.

GUSTAVE

If you are caught at it by your father, my much cherished uncle, he will invoke the family curse and send you to a convent.

ST. GEORGES

(*jumping off*)

There now—I won't put myself on exhibition any longer. Seulberg, you have worked the swing like a savage!

GUSTAVE

Count Seulberg, you have earned my commendation. Your swinging has earned your promotion. I am considering your fitness for the vacant post of Minister of Finance.

SEULBERG

My powers of balancing, I am afraid, won't suffice.

EVELINE

Gustave, I am afraid you overrate the state of your finances by suggesting that they require a minister for their administration.

GUSTAVE

Not at all, sweet cousin, I stand in urgent need of a Minister of Finance to make my deficit show to advantage.

ST. GEORGES

Do you think, Highness, that matters will improve, if you are lying here, star-gazing and passing *medisante* remarks about me?

GUSTAVE

It is my sovereign will to lie here and to contemplate the sky, until my luck has changed.

ST. GEORGES

How is that to come about?

GUSTAVE

My major-domo, Count Fehrenberg, is in Frankfort on a diplomatic mission. I expect him every minute.

EVELINE

Your expression is apt, but unworthy of our serene ancestors. What think you would Erwin-with-the-Harelip or Frederik Carl the Contrite have said to it? They didn't borrow.

GUSTAVE

They didn't have to. When hard up for cash, they took post in a secluded castle on the highroad and invited the passing merchant adventurers, regardless of creed, to a brief conference—after half an hour or so *they* were hard up for cash and our ancestors jocund.

EVELINE

But my dear Gustave, why don't you do likewise?

GUSTAVE

Measures like that are prohibited within the German Federation, as exceeding just a little our sovereign rights.

CHAMBER-VALET

Privy Councillor von Yssel.

GUSTAVE

Request the Privy Councillor to come here.

(VALET *off.*)

GUSTAVE

I am afraid he will be grave—and tedious. Out of tenderness for you, ladies, I give you leave to withdraw from the presence, putting you under the protecting care of Baron Seulberg.

(PRIVY COUNCILLOR VON YSSEL, *a rotund little man, enters, bowing to* GUSTAVE, *to the retiring ladies, and to* SEULBERG.)

GUSTAVE

Well, my dear Privy Councillor, what news?

YSSEL

I regret, Your Highness, to cloud a fine day for you, but I am bringing the balance of the budget.

GUSTAVE

(*seats himself on the swing and slowly sets it into motion*)

I am prepared for the worst. Pray, be brief.

YSSEL

After the death of His Highness, your late uncle, the finances of the duchy were already in an unfavorable condition.

GUSTAVE

I presume that under my regime they have become hopeless?

YSSEL

(*bowing*)

Your Highness have spoken truly.

GUSTAVE

Now, how do you account for that?

YSSEL

The personal expenditure of Your Highness while abroad in Paris and Vienna has been exorbitant.

GUSTAVE

I admit that my amusements from a financial view, and possibly from a moral one, exceeded the legitimate limit.

YSSEL

Large liabilities must shortly be met by the state—and the ducal exchequer is practically empty.

GUSTAVE

(*jumping from the swing*)

True, my dear Privy Councillor, something must be done to meet emergencies. You impress me as a man of trained powers of imagination—have the goodness to invent a new tax.

YSSEL

Your Highness, I am momentarily at my wits' end.

GUSTAVE

Couldn't we print some elegant new banknotes, after the latest French pattern, black lettering with red arabesks? Something should be done, anyway, to promote within our territory that new art of engraving on stone.

CHAMBER-VALET

Major-domo Count Fehrenberg! (*Ushers him in.*)

FEHRENBERG

(*a stately beau in his fifties, walking with a slight forward incline*)

I beg your pardon, Highness, for the delay; I felt obliged the other night to accept the invitation of the newly created Barons.

GUSTAVE

Your report, pray, which no doubt will interest our dear Privy Councillor too.

FEHRENBERG

I am truly grateful to Your Highness for having entrusted me with this interesting mission, which afforded me an opportunity——

GUSTAVE

Your impressions later. What have you accomplished?

FEHRENBERG

No final results as yet, of course. Only preliminaries have been discussed, but I gained the impression that Messieurs the Court Bankers look favorably upon the idea of a lottery loan. Seeing that the gentlemen desired a conference with Your Highness, I invited them to luncheon at the Castle.

GUSTAVE

Invited them to luncheon—did you deem that really necessary?

FEHRENBERG

I know Your Highness desires a speedy settlement of negotiations. Besides, the invitation will be taken as a compliment, not only to the Frankfort gentlemen, but to all your Jewish subjects.

GUSTAVE

(*to* YSSEL)

Have I any Jewish subjects?

YSSEL

(*searching his memory*)

We have a certain Rosenfeld.

GUSTAVE

Well, let's hope Rosenfeld will be pleased.

FEHRENBERG

Both ladies of the house have joined the party, which may arrive any moment.

GUSTAVE

My dear Privy Councillor, may I ask you to give orders to the steward to be ready for the caravan when it arrives?

YSSEL

At Your Highness' command. (*Exit.*)

FEHRENBERG

Have Your Highness further commands for me?

GUSTAVE

You may unpack now your bag of anecdotes concering your late hosts.

FEHRENBERG

I will do so, my liege lord, if the distinction be conferred upon me of keeping you company over a bottle of that choice Hochheimer dating from the comet—year of 1811.

GUSTAVE

What, drink at this early hour!

FEHRENBERG

It is a hallowed hour for choice wines.

GUSTAVE

Have your bottle, then.

(CHAMBER-VALET *enters with the bottle.*)

GUSTAVE

(*to the* VALET)

How did you know?

FEHRENBERG

Convinced of your desire to reward me, I have already given orders.

(*They sit down, the* VALET, *after uncorking the bottle and pouring, goes off.*)

GUSTAVE

Poor fellow, that must have been an unpleasant mission for you!

FEHRENBERG

On the contrary, it was very amusing. First the walk through Jew's Lane, where one meets people that are not to be encountered in a life-time elsewhere. And in this improbable lane, with its exotic smells, our Court Bankers are keeping house.

GUSTAVE

It must be affectation that prompts them to meet there?

FEHRENBERG

Affectaion, mingled with superstition. They are all interested in that lottery scheme, and that's why the five convened in Frankfort.

GUSTAVE

It may be their elevation to the Barony that brought them together. As for Salomon, I know him from Vienna.

FEHRENBERG

He seems to take the lead in all family affairs. It was he who procured their ennoblement.

GUSTAVE

Well, what had he to say?

FEHRENBERG

He was very discreet in his utterances, but all the more prodigal with his gestures.

GUSTAVE

I know, his bad manners are so perfectly free from every trace of embarrassment as to impress one almost like good manners. And the other four?

FEHRENBERG

They screen themselves in all politeness behind Salomon.

GUSTAVE

And Salomon?

FEHRENBERG

He impresses me as hugging some secret project to his breast. I believe you will do well to step cautiously with these gentlemen. They are evidently eager to overreach us.

GUSTAVE

Then it must be our ambition to foil them.

FEHRENBERG

That's why I invited them here. They will feel out of their element here, whereas at their offices they have us at a disadvantage. If they lend at all, it will be here.

GUSTAVE

Why shouldn't they? It's their business to finance reigning princes. I begin to entertain a belief that Divinity created them especially for this providential mission.

FEHRENBERG

And my dear Duke, if they refuse?

GUSTAVE

Then, my dear Major-Domo, I cede my sovereignty rights to Prussia, and with the proceeds I'll live in Paris like a gentleman.

FEHRENBERG

Messieurs the Court Bankers might possibly be inclined to take the dukedom off our hands.

GUSTAVE

Possibly. I can easily conceive of a Salomon the First.

FEHRENBERG

Salomon the Second, I beg your pardon—there has been already a reigning prince of that name.

GUSTAVE

Did you say you invited the ladies of the family?

FEHRENBERG

There are only two: the mother—sort of arch-dame of the house—makes the best impression because most genuine. And Solomon's daughter—an amiable little Viennese, invited to mitigate the severities of financial negotiations.

GUSTAVE

I know her, a blond miss with her nose *retroussè* in the face of all racial traditions.

FEHRENBERG

There will be difficulties about the fare at lunch. In their diet the old lady and one of the sons adhere strictly to religious precept.

GUSTAVE

My cook has served for five years in the domestic establishment of French royalty—I am afraid he didn't learn there the art of preparing *Kosher* cuisine.

VALET

(*announcing*)

His Highness, the Count Palatine Christopher Maurice. (*Off.*)

MAURICE

(*big, massive, inelegant*)

Your Dilection, I see, are guzzling in broad daylight.

GUSTAVE

Perhaps your Dilection may be pleased to accept a glass or so?

MAURICE

Well, rather! Pass the bottle! Good morning, Count Fehrenberg. (*Drinks.*) Ah! They said you were expecting visitors?

GUSTAVE
(*smiling*)

Quite a number.

MAURICE

Good! Your court is getting tiresome. Who's coming? The Darmstadters, or your kinsfolk from Kassel?

GUSTAVE

I don't believe these gentry are any relatives of mine.

MAURICE

Do you mean to have another general handshaking with the burgers? I think every one of your subjects must have had his turn already.

GUSTAVE

I am expecting visitors from Frankfort.

MAURICE

I have no relish for Frankforters. Who are they?

GUSTAVE

Our court bankers—and their family.

MAURICE
(*laughing*)

The Frankfort Jews? Why, Gustave, are you mad? I have heard of player-folk being called to court, of rope-dancers and fire-eaters, but to sit at table with a parcel of money-lenders—no, I never heard the like in all my life.

(EVELINE *enters.*)

MAURICE

Did you hear the news? Money-changers from Frankfort are expected.

EVELINE

At last a change of faces! I am awfully curious to know them.

MAURICE

Well, you won't, my lass—go to your room.

EVELINE

But father!

MAURICE

I never in my life had speech with any Jews. Such people should be kept at a distance.

GUSTAVE

You had better see what they are like then.

MAURICE

As a set-off I would advise you to invite the court-chaplain.

GUSTAVE

Agreed.

MAURICE

Do what you like—I am off on a hare-hunt. Adieu. (*Exit.*)

GUSTAVE

Follow him, Fehrenberg, he is capable of insulting our guests.

FEHRENBERG

Killing a hare will calm him. (*Off.*)

EVELINE

Did my father vex you?

GUSTAVE

There is only one drawback to the excellent qualities of my uncle —he missed his age by a hundred years. So did I. I should have been born a century later.

EVELINE

And I?

GUSTAVE

(*patting her*)

You are just in time.

EVELINE

Yes. It's a suitable time to be alive, I think.

GUSTAVE

I am thankful to Providence to have provided me with such a contemporary.

EVELINE

Gustave, I am seriously concerned about your future.

GUSTAVE

Glad to hear that. I am not.

EVELINE

But what will you do in your present embarrassments?

GUSTAVE

The Frankforters may come to the rescue. The gentlemen are vain and fond of flattery. You must help.

EVELINE

Gladly. I am burning with curiosity to see them.

(*Enter* FEHRENBERG. *Shortly thereafter* SEULBERG *and* ST. GEORGES.)

FEHRENBERG

A traveling coach is drawing near the portal.

GUSTAVE

The Frankforters?

FEHRENBERG

Most likely, though the coach does not look that way.

GUSTAVE

Shall we go to meet them?

FEHRENBERG

That would impress them with a sense of their importance. Better stay.

GUSTAVE

Madam de St. Georges, you will charge yourself with doing the honors. Baron Seulberg, you will see to it that luncheon is served in right royal fashion.

VALET

(*announcing*)

Their Highness the Prince and Princess of Klausthal-Agordo and the Right Reverend the Canon of Rouen.

FEHRENBERG

The old *grand seigneur* with his suite and our Frankfort Jews—there will be complications!

GUSTAVE

Our luncheon is imperilled! Fehrenberg, I expect of your adroitness that you will interpose between our guests.

FEHRENBERG

We won't give up hope that the Prince and his retinue will take their leave before luncheon.

GUSTAVE

Do you know this Canon that travels with them?

FEHRENBERG

Certainly. He administers spiritual consolation to the Princess by courting her in a quite secular fashion.

GUSTAVE

(*rising*)

We must go to meet them.

(*Enter* PRINCE, *a grand seigneur of fifty; the* PRINCESS, *a beautiful woman of thirty; the* CANON, *middle of the thirties.*)

PRINCE

Just a salute in passing, dear cousin.

PRINCESS

We didn't wish to ride past your residence without shaking hands. Do you know our Canon?

GUSTAVE

Count Fehrenberg related to me just now how interestingly you conceive of your spiritual office.

PRINCESS

His changeless fondness for *medisance* proves that he is in the best of health. Good morning, Cousin Eveline! Kiss me—you radiate that aura of sweet eighteen which is so caressing to a woman who has ceased to be young without having made up her mind to confess defeat.

FEHRENBERG

Serene Princess, I——

PRINCESS

Don't put yourself to the constraint of being nice, Count Fehrenberg—I won't trust you, whatever you say. (*Gives her hand to be kissed to* MADAM DE ST. GEORGES *and bestows a nod upon* SEULBERG.)

FEHRENBERG

I was only about to observe that the brilliancy of your grey eyes is reminiscent of the beauty, so infinitely dear to me, of grey caviare.

CANON

Most gracious Princess, you may believe for once in the sincerity of this compliment. Gourmandizing comparisons, with our cavaliers, betoken genuine emotion.

GUSTAVE

I trust you will do us the honor to have lunch with us.

PRINCESS

We must reach Frankfort before night-fall.

GUSTAVE

What's the pressing occasion, pray?

PRINCE

The last that is likely to hurry my pace for the balance of my life.

GUSTAVE

Your Highness is pleased to mean——?

PRINCE

This is a leave-taking visit. I have abdicated.

GUSTAVE

May I know Your Highness' reasons for taking such a step?

PRINCE

I have seen too much and lived too long to carry on the jest of playing at royalty upon my thronelet any longer. As a youth I have witnessed in Paris the barbarous execution of our bonny King Louis. I never could overcome the shock and throughout my reign couldn't get rid of a ticklish feeling behind the collar.

GUSTAVE

Your Serenity are possibly a little morbid?

PRINCE

Trust me, dear cousin, it isn't fear. I simply refuse to follow the democratic drift of this our age. Henceforth I'll be a mere spectator, having wound up all my affairs—an occupation not wholly devoid of interest.

PRINCESS

We intend to take up residence in Paris.

PRINCE

A landless Prince to the City of the Homeless.

CANON

(*kissing the hand of the* PRINCESS)

In Paris every beauty has a throne of her own.

FEHRENBERG

And our dear Canon will be studious to stand instead of a whole retinue in the service of beauty re-enthroned.

CANON

He also serves Divinity who serves the fair.

GUSTAVE

A dogma open to theological criticism. I don't doubt that our Princess won't languish in Paris—but Your Highness are used to an active life.

PRINCE

I'll collect old coins and read good books—if there are any left—I mean to look at life as a weary cavalier may watch the play from his box—I may even live to see the days of democracy pass.

GUSTAVE

At an early opportunity I may join you in your box.

PRINCE

You may rest assured of a cordial welcome, dear friend, but it's too early for you. Life's evening does not begin at twelve at noon. Your outlook upon life cannot be mine.

FEHRENBERG

I find this multicolored life of our present age vastly entertaining.

PRINCE

But only consider, dear Count! The distressful things that happen every day! All the social demarcation lines are becoming obliterated fast. Even the nobility is vulgarized. I understand that the Emperor made barons of his Court Jews.

(*A coachman's horn-signal is heard.*)

PRINCE

What say you to such news from Vienna, dear Duke?

GUSTAVE

Your Highness, I can't pass censure upon the new barons—chiefly because I am expecting them as my guests this very minute.

FEHRENBERG

I believe the gentlemen from Frankfort are alighting from their coach. (*Goes off.*)

GUSTAVE

To be sure, I did not expect to be favored to-day with the distinction of your visit, else I should have asked the gentlemen for another occasion. (*To the* PRINCESS *arising.*) I hope your Serenity won't take to flight on that account?

PRINCE

(*eagerly*)

But on the contrary, dear Duke, I am glad of the opportunity to meet here the very people on whose account I meant to make the journey to Frankfort, on business. Socially, of course, I have never met them. I am all the more curious to meet them for once outside of their own counting-rooms.

PRINCESS

If Madam de St. Georges will first have the goodness to assist me at my *toilette*——

ST. GEORGES

May I show the way to Your Highness? (*Off with the* PRINCESS.)

(FEHRENBERG *enters with* NATHAN, CARL *and* SALOMON.)

GUSTAVE

(*receiving them with a handshake, to* SALOMON)

My dear Baron, I have so often enjoyed your hospitality in Vienna that I am delighted to welcome you and your brothers to my

house.—I don't know if Your Highness already knows these gentlemen?

PRINCE

Certainly. They are so kind as to administer my small fortune.

SALOMON

Not so, Your Highness—it is a very attractive number of millions.

PRINCE

I suppose money has a way of accumulating in the course of centuries.

SALOMON

It need not always take that long.

PRINCE

(*distantly*)

That depends upon the means—dear Baron.

GUSTAVE

Where did you leave your ladies, gentlemen?

NATHAN

Our dear mother begs you to accept her excuses—she is not very well.

SALOMON

My daughter is driving with my two brothers. Their carriage should be here at any moment.

GUSTAVE

You have a long journey behind you, Herr Consul. Do you live in Naples or in Rome?

CARL

I make my home in Naples, but I spent a considerable time last winter in Rome.

CANON

How is the Holy Father?

CARL

His Holiness was pleased at my last sojourn to receive me in audience.

GUSTAVE

You call often at the Vatican, don't you?

CARL

Not often enough, I regret to say, to get much conversation with the Pope.

GUSTAVE

The callings in life are perhaps too disparate to admit of any real intimacy. (*To* NATHAN:) I beg to congratulate you gentlemen upon your elevation in rank.

PRINCE

I beg to join in Duke Gustave's felicitations.

SALOMON

Many thanks, Your Highness. We were entirely taken by surprise. Such a token of the Emperor's good-will was utterly unexpected and unlooked for.

PRINCE

All the greater the rejoicing, I presume, over the utterly unexpected.

(*Enter* AMSCHEL, JACOB, CHARLOTTE.)

GUSTAVE

(*approaching* CHARLOTTE)

My dear Baroness, I am happy to meet you under my own roof.

CHARLOTTE

(*curtseying*)

At Your Highness' service.

GUSTAVE

Dear Princess Eveline—you complained about lack of companionship—I invoke your protection for this young lady.

EVELINE
(*extending her hand*)

You are welcome, Baroness.

GUSTAVE

Good morning, dear Consul—we are old acquaintances, are we not?

AMSCHEL
(*bowing*)

Assuredly.

GUSTAVE

Your Highness has met the Consul? (*Shakes hands with* JACOB.)

PRINCE

Certainly.

AMSCHEL

I am glad, Your Highness, of this chance meeting.

PRINCE
(*smiling*)

Not at all—I came on purpose to meet you.

GUSTAVE

And now, ladies and gentlemen, having acquitted myself of my hospitable task to bore you with salutatories, let each of us seek his personal amusement after his own liking until luncheon. Castle and cellars, chapel and garden-grounds, are yours to command. As regards myself, permit me, after my own fashion, to devote myself to the ladies. (*He turns to* CHARLOTTE *and* EVELINE.)

PRINCE

We shall meet again at lunch then. Count Fehrenberg, have the goodness to show me to the Princess' apartments. (*Off with* FEHRENBERG, *followed by the* CANON *and* SEULBERG.)

GUSTAVE

(*to* CHARLOTTE)

Your title of nobility suits you admirably.

CHARLOTTE

As befitting, I daresay, as your irony.

EVELINE

You are in the same predicament with me, Baroness. I never know whether my cousin is serious or joking.

GUSTAVE

Most of the time I don't know myself. But let us show the Baroness our ancient park grounds. (*They walk off the scene in an animated chat, leaving the brothers alone, to their manifest surprise.*)

AMSCHEL

(*looking about him*)

Why, they have left us alone!

CARL

(*looking after the retiring group*)

Your Lottie interests the Duke more than we do.

SALOMON

Quite natural. A young girl is always more interesting than five full-grown Jews.

NATHAN

These people are very prime, but their politeness doesn't ring true.

AMSCHEL

They overwhelm us with their courtesy—and yet they are plainly making merry over us.

NATHAN

I feel that too—and am annoyed at my annoyance.

SALOMON

Why, Nathan, that's their game—to have us at a disadvantage. Why do you think we were invited here?

NATHAN

The Duke will overreach you.

SALOMON

Will he? He'd be the first, I warrant you.

CARL

If I were you, I wouldn't talk to the Duke about that plan of yours —not here, at any rate. There is an oppressive influence about the place.

SALOMON

The place will do as well as another. I am not afraid.

NATHAN

These are matters too foreign to my manner of life. Consider, we have entered upon the enemy's camp.

SALOMON

What matter? We have to struggle for position wherever ve go —except in Jew's Lane.

JACOB

We are out of place here—not a doubt about it. Mother, with her usual good sense, stayed at home.

SALOMON

That's right—hang on to mother's apron-strings.

JACOB

I wished I had followed my first impulse and stayed away.

SALOMON

(*raising his voice in the forgetfulness of his distraction*)

You have no pluck! Had our father been such a drop-tail like you, we'd be trading in old coins to this day instead of millions.

AMSCHEL
(*soothingly*)

Hush, hush!

(*Enter* FEHRENBERG.)

FEHRENBERG

I beg you will pardon me, gentlemen, for leaving you, but the old Prince——

AMSCHEL

Say no more, Sir. Say no more. We didn't notice your absence.

FEHRENBERG

May I show you over the Castle? We have a cabinet of old coins and a collection of old armor——

CARL

I should like to see—er—the arms.

FEHRENBERG
(*to* AMSCHEL)

And about our financial affairs, we may talk at luncheon between the desert and the cheese.

AMSCHEL

Hardly. Cheese after meat is disallowed me. (*They enter the house.*)

(*From the rear, the* DUKE, CHARLOTTE.)

CHARLOTTE

I like the old, old trees in the park so much more than those trimmed hedges.

GUSTAVE

Exactly my own taste. I have romped there as a boy. When I think of home abroad, I don't visualize the Castle—only the ancient trees.

CHARLOTTE

Their spell does not seem to have a strong hold on you. You are always on the road to Vienna or Paris.

GUSTAVE

Experience and self-examination have convinced me that young women affect me more strongly than old trees.

CHARLOTTE

Your talk always turns upon women.

GUSTAVE

If men of my age talk of anything else, they are practicing hypocrisy.

CHARLOTTE

At my home male talk turns mostly on other topics.

GUSTAVE

The estimable qualities of your relatives are quite in another field —and I hope to profit by them.

CHARLOTTE

I don't know if you picture to yourself my relatives aright. My Uncle Jacob——

GUSTAVE

I hardly know him, though we were on bowing terms in Paris.

CHARLOTTE

I, too, have just made his acquaintance. He does not take after his brothers.—Why do you look at me so strangely?

GUSTAVE

Looking at you is for the present the most agreeable occupation open to me.

CHARLOTTE

Very well—then you may look at pleasure.

GUSTAVE

I should like to make permanent use of your permission.

CHARLOTTE

More flattery! Highness, you underrate me. Enough of me—let's change the subject.

GUSTAVE

To hear is to obey. How do you like the court?

CHARLOTTE

The atmosphere is strange to me. An atmosphere of masculine adoration.

GUSTAVE

Does it render you uneasy?

CHARLOTTE

Not at all—but pardon me, I shouldn't care to live in that style.

GUSTAVE

Is the style of your family any more to your liking?

CHARLOTTE

It isn't exactly what I want either. To walk always in the shadow of our men-folk, as our women do—no, I shouldn't like that.

GUSTAVE

What are your wishes for the future, then?

CHARLOTTE

Very vague ones. I am curiously expecting life—that's all.

(*Enter the* FIVE BROTHERS *and* COUNT FEHRENBERG.)

NATHAN

(*to* FEHRENBERG)

A splendid collection!

AMSCHEL

(*to* SALOMON, *with a significant glance in the direction of* CHARLOTTE *and* GUSTAVE)

Look at them!

SALOMON

As if I hadn't been sure my Lottie would please him!

JACOB

The vernal moods of St. Cloud are all over the castle grounds, Your Highness.

SALOMON

All very well, but we didn't come to discuss vernal moods. Your Highness, by your leave, I propose we proceed to business.

GUSTAVE

By all means—if the Baroness will excuse us?

SALOMON

My brother Jacob will discuss with her the landscape—that's what she likes.

JACOB

Gladly—come, Lottie!

GUSTAVE

Auf Wiedersehn, Baroness! (JACOB *with* CHARLOTTE *off to the park.*) Now, gentlemen. (*They sit down.*)

SALOMON

(*with a calm that masks his suppressed excitement*)

The figures in elucidation of our lottery loan scheme have been submitted to Privy Councillor Yssel for examination.

GUSTAVE

Spare me the figures, Herr Baron, I won't pretend to understand them, anyway. My candid interest is centered wholly upon the twelve millions.

NATHAN

May I ask how you would propose to invest such a sum?

GUSTAVE

Oh, we shall find good use for it—you may rest assured. Speaking generally, I shall devote it to the improvement of my circumstances.

SALOMON

Your Highness, your difficulties are no secret to us.

GUSTAVE

Certainly not. Even the primitive intelligence of my subjects perceives, that my deficit stands in inverse—and perverse—ratio to the extent of my territories.

SALOMON

Now, supposing that our firm would advance such a sum as you require—what is the nature of the security you could offer us?

(*A brief silence.*)

GUSTAVE

Security? Would it be customary to offer security in an affair of this kind? Let's see—I could pledge a part of my revenue—or of the taxes——

FEHRENBERG

I must remind Your Highness that you have already anticipated the next five years' income——

GUSTAVE

To be sure—I forgot. Thank you for reminding me.

FEHRENBERG

Gentlemen, the produce of the Duchy could be enormously increased by a careful and prudent administration. There are extensive forests—some coal—and mineral springs.

"More Flattery! Highness,—let's change the subject."

SALOMON

We have considered that. Lumber and coal will rise in value, but it takes money to develop these properties.

GUSTAVE

Cannot I give you my personal security?

SALOMON

Your Highness, you may have unconsciously suggested a possible solution. I must premise, however, that such a guarantee, in keeping with your extraordinary personality, would be of an unusual, I may say, an extraordinary nature.

GUSTAVE

Mr. Court Banker, you arouse my curiosity.

AMSCHEL

(*rising in embarrassment*)

I beg permission to withdraw from the presence.

Your pardon, Highness, but I am not quite well.

CARL

(*likewise rising*)

Highness, our brother Salomon is straying from the road of business pure and simple in his present excursion. I think I had best join my brother in a prayer for leave to withdraw.

SALOMON

(*in an undertone*)

The cowards!

GUSTAVE

(*wondering*)

Of course—as you please. (*Exeunt both.*)

FEHRENBERG

If for any reason you wish to be alone——?

GUSTAVE

No, stay, my dear Fehrenberg!

SALOMON

Let me beg of you to stay—and my brother Nathan likewise.

GUSTAVE

Mr. Court Banker, I am getting inquisitive.

SALOMON

Your Highness—I have your permission to be quite candid?

GUSTAVE

You have my command.

SALOMON

Your Highness—a sound rearrangement of your finances is only possible through matrimonial alliance.

GUSTAVE

We have thought of that—haven't we, Fehrenberg? But we couldn't find anything suitable.

SALOMON

What would Your Highness consider suitable?

GUSTAVE

Youth, charm, beauty—and a great deal of money.

SALOMON

I can offer you all this.

GUSTAVE

(*amused*)

You can? I am overwhelmed at the versatility of your enterprise. Where have you found a lady of my rank so admirably fitting?

SALOMON

Your Highness, the concept of equality of station is not the same in our age as during the preceding ones. You, Highness, grown to manhood during the Napoleonic epoch and full of French *esprit*——

GUSTAVE

Have done with compliments—well?

SALOMON

Believing Your Highness, that your prophetic soul anticipates the social developments of the future——

GUSTAVE

(*interrupting him*)

Out with it, Herr Court Banker—whom do you propose to me as future mother of the country?

NATHAN

Salomon, take thought if you had not better keep your proposal to yourself.

SALOMON

I am well aware of its boldness. And yet I'll venture to submit it, in correct appreciation, I trust, of Your Highness' greatness of soul. Frankly, then, I propose to Your Highness a matrimonial alliance with my daughter Charlotte.

GUSTAVE

But, Herr Court Banker! Herr Court Banker! (*Breaking into laughter.*) Fehrenberg, what say you? What's the formal response to such a proposal, Mr. Major-domo?

FEHRENBERG

(*officially*)

Your Highness, court etiquette has not considered such an emergency.

GUSTAVE

(*with an especial effort at politeness*)

I admit I am a little taken aback. You see I am laughing. But you might have chosen a moment when I would have met your proposal with an abrupt termination of hospitalities.

SALOMON

I am happy to have divined the psychological moment for such a risky venture aright.

FEHRENBERG

Quite so. In such matters everything hinges upon the right moment. I have been enabled once to buy a country-seat in Baden-Baden because the ace of diamonds turned up in the right moment.

GUSTAVE

Well thought of, my dear Fehrenberg—the situation is certainly suggestive of a game at hazard. Herr Court Banker, you forget the principle of legitimacy.

SALOMON

We derive it from our wealth, which grows apace and works for us in all the capitals of Europe.

GUSTAVE

I am far from despising wealth.

SALOMON

An alliance between our families will reflect undying honor upon our house. Nor will it be, I trust, quite disadvantageous to yours.

GUSTAVE

Such a match is without precedent.

SALOMON

Your Highness will set the precedent.

NATHAN

(*to* SALOMON)

No need to importune His Highness for an immediate decision, is there?

SALOMON

(*smiling*)

Nay, brother, temporizing would mean defeat. If Your Highness will deign to say "Yes," the necessary arrangements regarding the lottery loan will be made at our office to-morrow at noon, and the money paid forthwith into your treasury.

GUSTAVE

A convincing argument.

SALOMON

Have I your assent then, Your Highness?

GUSTAVE

Well—er—yes—providing of course your daughter will consent.

SALOMON

Won't she, though!

(JACOB *and* CHARLOTTE *return from their garden promenade.*)

CHAMBERLAIN

(*announcing*)

Luncheon is served.

GUSTAVE

(*to* CHARLOTTE)

Baroness, your arm, pray. (*They turn to the exit.*)

SALOMON
(*radiant, to* NATHAN)
Here is where we lead and competition can't follow!

NATHAN
It *will* follow—be sure of that!

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

Another room in FRAU GUDULA'S *mansion. To the right an ample writing-desk. A portrait of old Meyer Amschel on the wall. Deep windows with a view upon the garden in the rear.*

GUDULA *and* CHARLOTTE *at the breakfast-table, which is cleared by* ROSE, *who leaves presently.*

GUDULA

Didst like the good cheer, lassie?

CHARLOTTE

A capital breakfast, Grannie. The other day at court I ate but little.

GUDULA

Didn't you feel at ease?

CHARLOTTE

Oh, I felt stared at! I know the feeling from our official dinners at Vienna. You are being criticized all the time—the way you dress—your table manners—everything you say; they sit there stiffly—are very polite—and wait for the first *faux pas* from the banker's daughter. When at last it comes——

GUDULA

Does it?

CHARLOTTE

It is quite a relief. The critics feel contented and gay.

GUDULA

At our expense. Well, let them. We can think what we like of them. Folks that don't belong together should be kept apart. Those grand folks are unlike ourselves.

CHARLOTTE

The difference isn't so big, Grannie. They have their etiquette—and we have ours. Only with us it is named differently. Both sets are unfree. Only you, Grannie, are sensible enough to go your own way.

GUDULA

I am an old woman and have nothing to lose.

CHARLOTTE

As for the Duke—there are no restraints for him. He takes every hurdle at a jump.

GUDULA

Did he pay you much attention?

CHARLOTTE

He took me down to lunch.

GUDULA

What had he to tell?

CHARLOTTE

He just told funny stories under his breath—good ones—like one of our people.

GUDULA

I can't abide those everlasting funny stories—not among our own folk either.

CHARLOTTE

The Duke has the unconstraint of an impudent street urchin. Withal he is very young for all his worldly ways.

GUDULA

Did you like him?

CHARLOTTE

(*indifferently*)

Rather. You will like him, too.

GUDULA

I won't get the chance.

CHARLOTTE

But Grannie, he is coming to-day to see you.

GUDULA

I can't make up my mind to it.

CHARLOTTE

Why not? The Landgrave of Hesse and others of the same rank have been here often enough.

GUDULA

Mind, child: they sat at table, ate, drank, called my Amschel "dear friend," pinned decorations to his coat, but their errand was known for all that: they came to borrow money. And further, they were old men; a young prince never came to this house.

(*Enter* SALOMON, *in high spirits.*)

SALOMON

Mother! This is a great day for us!—I hope everything has been put into befitting shape?

GUDULA

What would you have me put into shape?

SALOMON

The house—for the reception of our visitors!

GUDULA

(*roughly*)

My house is in order. Whosoever comes to see me, will find me as I always am.

SALOMON

(*offended*)

Are you aware who is coming? Oh, nobody in particular—only the Duke of Taunus and the Prince of Klausthal.

GUDULA

(*as above*)

What's their will with me? I am not on exhibition.

SALOMON

The royalties desire to know you and our family seat.

GUDULA

I know better. Let them go to the *Fahrgass,* to Amschel's house, a little farther down the lane—that's where they'll find the money.

SALOMON

The business must be settled here—in my father's lucky house.

GUDULA

(*smiling*)

The Herr Baron is perhaps pleased to be superstitious?

SALOMON

(*laughing*)

He takes after his mother. Let me be, I will see to everything. I only ask of you to keep old Rose out of sight to-day.

GUDULA

Stuff and nonsense—everything in my house remains at the old footing. I am too old to learn the custom of the court.

SALOMON

Say what you will, Mother, you will brighten up sure enough before the day is over. Well, and you, Lottie? (*Patting her.*) Feeling bright? That's right. Only you might have put on a finer dress, with your little neck free to wear this set of stones. (*Hands her an etui.*)

CHARLOTTE

Why, these are diamonds, father!

GUDULA

Since when have you become so free-handed, Salomon? I don't recognize you any more.

SALOMON

Nothing too costly for my Lottie!

CHARLOTTE

(*toying with the set*)

Father—I really think you want me to do something for you.

SALOMON

On the contrary, my child, on the contrary—I mean to do something for *you*. Go and put on your finery.

CHARLOTTE

Auf Wiedersehn! (*Off.*)

SALOMON

A good-looking lass is a first-rate investment.

GUDULA

She has sense as well as good looks.

SALOMON

(*gleefully rubbing his hands*)

Plenty of sense—any amount of sense.

GUDULA

You are in such high spirits the day—did you do a good stroke of business?

SALOMON

Prepared one, Mother. I have been sitting up with Nathan until deep into the night to figure things out. That's better for my health than a nerve cure. After such a go at figures I always feel as fine as a fiddle. It's a pleasure to do team-work with Nathan. He has father's head upon his shoulders.

GUDULA

Why don't you call Jacob in on such occasions to teach him?

SALOMON

There is too much of other matter on his mind. He hasn't sobered down as yet sufficiently for business. Anyway, I meant to have a word with you about the lad. Why is he out of spirits?

GUDULA

I have my own ideas about that.

SALOMON

The other day at court he had not one word to say, sitting there as if in an extreme of embarrassment, and admitting thereby that he doesn't belong—a witless conduct that reflects upon all of us.

GUDULA

Young people have their moods. He is keeping his own counsel.

(*Enter* CARL.)

CARL

How d'ye, Mother? (*Nods to* SALOMON.) I am afraid my stay is drawing to an end. I must return.

SALOMON

Are you so hotly bent on airing your title at Rome and Naples?

CARL

The idea! I am returning on urgent business. There has been another dispatch urging expedition about that Piedmontese loan.

SALOMON

I told you once before: we don't do business with Piedmont. I pledged my word to Metternich and Gentz to withhold supplies in that quarter.

GUDULA

(*to* CARL)

Cannot you stay a day or two? Maybe you don't fancy the old town any longer.

CARL

On the contrary, Frankfort is fine—I have a loathing for Naples. If only I could stay in Germany.

SALOMON

Why not go to Berlin?

CARL

There are no earning chances among those rustics.

GUDULA

Haven't you one of your young men there representing you?

SALOMON

(*indifferently*)

Aye, a certain Bleichroeder—a promising young fellow.

(*Enter* AMSCHEL *and* JACOB.)

AMSCHEL

Excuse our being late, but we had a constant flow of visitors—the whole town is talking about our new title. We have been simply overwhelmed with congratulations. Ask Jacob.

JACOB

To be sure, they sounded now and then a little suspicious. Only in Jew's Lane they rang true.

AMSCHEL

They all feel ennobled with us. Shouldn't wonder if the entire Lane were to embroider a coronet upon their linen.

GUDULA

Well, little Jacob, how did you like it at the Duke's the other day?

JACOB

I liked the court well enough, but hardly the errand that brought us there.

SALOMON

You can't but admit that the Duke received us on a footing of equality.

AMSCHEL

The Duke is very nice—pity he isn't a Jew.

(*Enter* NATHAN.)

SALOMON

Well—everything arranged?

NATHAN

I have drawn up the settlements with the Duke on the lines we discussed last night—there they are.

AMSCHEL

You might have dictated them at my counting-room.

NATHAN

And let a stranger gain an insight into our secrets? Certainly not. The money is ready at hand. A million florins as an initial payment in ready cash, the balance to be paid at the successive terms agreed on.

AMSCHEL

Why in cash?

SALOMON

To make an impression.

NATHAN

Your bank-messenger must cart it to the house and we'll pile it up on the table——

SALOMON

Like a Christmas gift.

GUDULA

Children, if you must talk business, perhaps I had better leave you.

SALOMON

Stay, mother, with the business part of this affair we are nearly through, and as regards the rest, we must have your opinion.

NATHAN

This night we have gone minutely into the Duke's financial position, with the surprising result that we find it more satisfactory than we supposed possible.

AMSCHEL

Governing is always a lucrative pursuit, but these people don't understand their business.

SALOMON

Only let me take charge and watch the profits grow!

NATHAN

The country is rich in natural resources. With orderly management, our loan is safe. As a matter of fact, our risk is confined to the amount of the first payment. By way of recompense, the Duke must give us the monopoly of salt and coal-mining throughout his territories. There are big possibilities in that.

AMSCHEL

Well—and how about Lottie?

SALOMON

The Duke will call to-day to ask her hand in marriage.

AMSCHEL

I can't as yet believe it.

NATHAN

You may. He said "Yes" in my presence.

GUDULA

(*frightened*)

Children—children! I am afraid there is no bliss in such a union.

SALOMON

Well, Mother, did you consider the matter over night?

GUDULA

It wouldn't let me sleep at night. Whenever at some turn of affairs I am at my wits' end, I ask myself: what would my Amschel have done about it? This is the first time my dead husband, your father, does not make answer.—Amschel, you are my oldest, tell me what your father *selig* would have said about it?

AMSCHEL

Truth to tell, Mother, I don't know. I can't get the matter to rights myself. There is that religious difficulty. Will she have to be baptized?

SALOMON

Did you think of *him* as a convert?

AMSCHEL

Are you seriously considering it?

SALOMON

Well, in the case of a young girl—besides, one may turn Christian for any number of reasons. Some do it to enter government service, others for the sake of a marriage——

AMSCHEL

Or from genuine conviction.

SALOMON

To be sure—one might even get baptized because of genuine conviction.

AMSCHEL

Salomon, have done with your levities! At any rate, I won't attend the wedding. I won't sit down at table with relatives that snicker at my dietary strictness.

GUDULA

Neither will I. The wedding will have to be celebrated in a church, and I won't set foot into a church.

CARL

I think you make too much of the religious difficulty—no one can hinder her to remain at heart a loyal Jewess. Think of the social prestige that such a match will give us.

NATHAN

The international sensation it is bound to create will greatly benefit us in business. We may congratulate ourselves.

SALOMON

Was heisst "we"? *He* may congratulate himself. Just watch me develop the duchy.

"We prospered because we five were as one"

GUDULA

You can't undo it—these people are our betters.

SALOMON

Are they?

GUDULA

And you, little Jacob—have you nothing to say?

JACOB

I am against it—but my opinion naturally carries little weight.

AMSCHEL

Give mouth to your objection—you know our custom. Each must say his mind at every important turn. We five belong together.

JACOB

We won't very long, if this wedding is to take place. We prospered because we five were as one. You are about to bring a stranger into our councils.

GUDULA

And now I know what my Amschel *selig* would have said—he spoke through the mouth of his youngest. Bring the strange kinship into our house, and our good fortune will be at an end.

SALOMON

All wrong, I say! Our father was a bigger man than you conceive him. He struck out for new roads as a merchant, I am doing the same in family affairs.

JACOB

Our father didn't look upon his daughters as objects of speculation.

SALOMON

Judicious—he couldn't. They didn't have the looks.

JACOB

It's a pity about Lottie.

SALOMON

Lottie you needn't pity—she has more sense than you—enough, at

any rate, to know her own mind—you can't have any voice in this, being a bachelor. What do *you* know about the married state? He should bethink himself of a suitable match. (*To* JACOB:) To do big business in Paris, you must have a domestic establishment, receive in grand style——

CARL

Don't hurry him, children—I wished *I* had had time for a sober second thought!

AMSCHEL

Who told you to marry a marchioness?

CARL

I needed social standing. Had I known the event, I should have thought better of it.

JACOB

And yet the same sort of match will do you for Lottie?

CARL

It's different with women. My wife is happy. I am not.

AMSCHEL

Jacob, I know a wife for you.

JACOB

(*smiling*)

Much obliged, Amschel; I mean to do the choosing myself.

CARL

That's just what I did. I tell you, you had better let some one else attend to that.

JACOB

But tastes in beauty differ.

AMSCHEL

Beautiful or not, one gets used to most any woman in wedlock.

SALOMON

But to a beautiful one more quickly.

ROSE

(*announcing*)

The Prince of Klausthal.

SALOMON

Well, what did I tell you? (*Goes to meet him.*)

AMSCHEL

The first of our royal relatives to call.

GUDULA

I can't abide that turn of things with Lottie. Don't talk to me—I'll see no one.

(*Enter the* PRINCE, *with* SALOMON.)

SALOMON

Welcome, Your Highness.

PRINCE

(*very civilly*)

Good morning, gentlemen.

SALOMON

We are grateful to your Serenity for the honor of your visit.

PRINCE

(*with cool civility*)

Not at all. I came on business purely.

CARL

Delighted to have you with us on any terms. Be seated, pray.

PRINCE

(*remains standing, very civilly*)

I am much obliged to you.

AMSCHEL

(*bursting into a little pause of embarrassment*)

How does Your Highness like Frankfort?

PRINCE

(*as above*)

I know the town of old—saving, of course, this quarter of the city. (*An awkward silence.*)

My young cousin Gustave of Taunus has advised me of—er—of the errand that will lead him to your house this day.

SALOMON

May we know how Your Highness received the news?

PRINCE

I had no time to discuss it with the Duke.

SALOMON

Won't Your Highness state the view you are taking of this matter?

PRINCE

(*very civilly*)

I have no reason to withhold my opinion from my prospective relatives.

SALOMON

We are all anxious to hear it.

PRINCE

What the libertarians of France endeavored to accomplish with the guillotine, Messieurs the Bankers of Frankfort are attempting with the coupon scissors. I own that I am opposed to leveling efforts, whatever the chosen tool of equalization may be. (*Embarrassment.*)

AMSCHEL

Won't Your Highness at any rate be seated?

PRINCE

(*as above*)

Much obliged, dear Baron, but I have very little to add. Under the circumstances, I think it proper to terminate our business

relations. I am about to make my home abroad. You will therefore please transmit to Paris the deposits I entrusted to your care.

SALOMON

It shall be done by special messenger, since this is Your Highness' pleasure.

AMSCHEL

Is Your Highness dissatisfied with our management of your affairs?

PRINCE

Oh, no. But as by my cousin's marriage I shall have the honor of being distantly connected with your family, I consider it inconvenient that you should continue the administration of my finances. I could not burden my relatives—however distant.

AMSCHEL

I am very sorry. Your Highness may possibly reconsider——

SALOMON

(*on a level of politeness with the* PRINCE)

My dear brother, I must beg of you not to attempt to influence His Highness' decisions. Your Highness have spoken in anticipation of my own views. I am very far from wishing to derive any advantages in the way of business through my daughter's marriage.

PRINCE

(*to* SALOMON)

I am glad we are in accord. (*Including the other brothers in his address.*) Gentlemen, the Emperor has been pleased to elevate you to a barony. German noblemen, according to my way of thinking, have no business to be in business.—I regret not having met the ladies of your family. May I request you to convey to them my compliments—and permit me to wish you good-day?

(SALOMON *bows in silence.*)

PRINCE
(*bowing*)
Gentlemen, I have the honor to take my leave.

CARL
Your Highness will permit me to conduct you to the door.

PRINCE
I am greatly obliged to you. (*Exeunt both.*)

AMSCHEL
In such manner I never lost a client.

SALOMON
The old fool—he will yet be sorry for it, no matter where he means to bank his money!

NATHAN
Don't call any names—I can see that he impressed you.

SALOMON
To be sure he did—that's why I seek to ally myself with his sort.

JACOB
Our future kinsfolk, it seems, don't take to you very kindly.

SALOMON
The Duke does—and as for his cousin, what do I care!

JACOB
He has been asked his opinion, and he has told it with irreproachable politeness.

NATHAN
He was as civil as an executioner beheading a king.

AMSCHEL
His opinion is of no consequence, but the sudden withdrawal of his funds does not exactly suit our convenience.

AMSCHEL
All the same, the capital must be raised at once, it must reach Paris

before him. He must be shown that we don't care for his money. Depend upon it, he will seek us again.

(*Enter* CARL, *doing the honors to* GUSTAVE *and* FEHRENBERG.)

CARL

My brothers, to be sure, are sharing my elation over this honor.

GUSTAVE

Good morning, gentlemen. (*All bow to the* DUKE.)

SALOMON

Your Highness, I trust, will pardon our failure to meet you on the road—we expected the distinction of your visit somewhat later in the day.

GUSTAVE

The excuses are all mine for arriving before the time appointed, but I was impatient with curiosity to see your family mansion.

SALOMON

The house is not half bad, but the Lane——

GUSTAVE

Oh, pray, Herr Baron, the Lane too is an old tradition—(*shaking hands*) two traditions have met at last.

CARL

It is very complaisant of Your Highness to call our dingy Lane a tradition.

GUSTAVE

Baron, in this antiquated Lane, where one receives the impression at first of time standing still, the most modern of contemporary mankind have their home.

AMSCHEL

Won't Your Highness pray be seated?

GUSTAVE

Gladly, my dear Consul. (*Moves as if about to sit down.*)

FEHRENBERG

(*offering five little boxes which he takes from out of his coat-flaps*)

Won't Your Highness first——?

GUSTAVE

Well reminded, my dear Fehrenberg. *Meine Herrn,* I herewith create you Knights of my Domestic Order and take pleasure in presenting you with the insignia. (*He pins a cross upon* AMSCHEL'S *breast-front.*) Thereon, my dear Consul, you will find the inscription: *"Pour la vertue militaire."* I chose this decoration on purpose. You have evidenced in a high degree the military virtue of courage—you have offered to lend me money. Upon you, my dear Salomon, I bestow the Grand Cordon of the Order, because you gave proof the other day of a courage bordering upon downright audacity. (*Decorates him with the grand cordon—a cross upon a big red sash.*) In strictest confidence, now, I call your attention to an important detail: the sash is of sufficient width to serve in lieu of a waistcoat—an advantage which I myself turn to good account during the hot season.

SALOMON

Your Highness, in my own name and in the name of my brothers, I thank you. My courage may be greater than you think.

(*Enter* GUDULA *and* CHARLOTTE.)

GUDULA

(*perfectly sure-footed and ladylike*)

Welcome, Duke Gustave, under my roof.

GUSTAVE

Baroness, I regret having missed the privilege of seeing you under my own the other day. (*Kissing her hand.*) I desire your better acquaintance, Baroness.

GUDULA

(*turning to* FEHRENBERG)

Good morning to you, Count Fehrenberg.

GUSTAVE

(*to* CHARLOTTE)

My dear Baroness!

CHARLOTTE

(*curtseying*)

Your Highness!

GUSTAVE

I should like to pay court to you now in my best manner, but my conversational resources have a knack of always failing when my sentiments are getting serious.

CHARLOTTE

Perhaps you overestimate the seriousness of your sentiments?

SALOMON

Highness, I would propose that we transact business first.

GUSTAVE

You shall fix the order of the day to please yourself.

SALOMON

If I may trouble Your Highness to come into the adjoining room, we will there discuss the settlements and sign. A first payment of a million, in gold and hundred-florin notes, lies on the table. As soon as our treaty is signed, our bank messenger will convey the money to your treasury. (*Opens the door.*)

GUSTAVE

(*in the act of leaving*)

Thoughtful and generous, I call that. (*Exeunt* GUSTAVE, FEHRENBERG *and the four* BROTHERS. JACOB *remains standing on the threshold.*)

GUDULA

Well, little Jacob, why don't you join your brothers? At such weighty business you ought to be right with them.

JACOB

I will have no lot nor part in it.

GUDULA

It's not to my liking either, little Jacob, to have such folks in my house—and yet I give them their due. (*To* CHARLOTTE:) If only I knew what to put before the Duke. What do *you* give?

CHARLOTTE

Such people are fond of champagne.

GUDULA

That's too rich for me. Just before that sort I won't have any display. They shall have some of my Amschel's old Burgundy. (*Off.*)

CHARLOTTE

Uncle Jacob, I don't rightly understand why you oppose that negotiation with the Duke.

JACOB

It may be wrong of me to tell, but I can't leave you in darkness any longer. It is your fate they are sealing behind that door.

CHARLOTTE

My fate! Do you think that can be settled without calling me in council?

JACOB

In requital of the services rendered him by your father, the Duke will ask your hand to-day in marriage.

CHARLOTTE

I thank you for your frankness, Uncle Jacob. I have suspected that something of that order would come to pass, but not so soon as all that.

JACOB

(*bitterly*)

Your father insists upon promptness in all matters of business.

CHARLOTTE

(*gravely*)

Jacob, I noticed the other day already that you are incensed against

my father. I must urge you now not to say anything to his disparagement. He loves me in his own way and means to do the best he can for me.

JACOB

You are pleased with the Duke, then?

CHARLOTTE

Certainly. He is clever. He takes a superior view of men and things. Behind his irony there is a hearty cheerfulness. He is a handsome young man and none the worse for knowing it. If his dominions are not extensive, he is a rightful sovereign for all that; his wife will wear a crown.

JACOB

Now I know how you will receive his suit.

CHARLOTTE

If you do you know more than I do myself. I have pictured my future betrothed differently. Quieter, more dreamy. Less irony—more sentiment. No retinue of courtiers, a life without a grand *mise-en-scene* and without beholders. I should like to give—all my soul—freely—and that's impossible with the Duke. (*Abruptly.*) Tell me, Uncle Jacob, why do you object to the Duke? Don't you like him?

JACOB

Perhaps it's only my envy. He is as sure of life—as I am not. You are right, Charlotte, nothing speaks against him—and that's just why I am unhappy.

CHARLOTTE

Little Jacob, is that all that ails you?

JACOB

Oh, nothing ails me.

CHARLOTTE

Quite right—think how many are envying you.

JACOB

I have no worry—to be sure. And yet, I did not choose my calling. The life of a banker is a life—I don't know how to express myself—a life without color, without music.

CHARLOTTE

(*smiling*)

Music! I see—you would like to emulate your friend Rossini.

JACOB

Rossini! When I am sitting at play, I would gladly change places with every little fiddler in the orchestra who knows his music and nothing else in the world.

CHARLOTTE

Perhaps the fiddler would not be disinclined to close the bargain. These be strange longings for a banker of the house of Rothschild.

JACOB

Laugh, Lottie, laugh at me! It stimulates me—gives me courage. (*Struggling for expression.*) Oh, Lottie—if only I could tell you——

CHARLOTTE

(*moved*)

Don't speak, little Jacob, say nothing. I know now.

JACOB

(*kissing her hands*)

Lottie!

CHARLOTTE

(*caressing his hair*)

You are so young—so young!

(*Enter, from the adjoining room, the* DUKE, FEHRENBERG, *the four* BROTHERS, *a little later* GUDULA.)

SALOMON

(*to* GUSTAVE *upon entering*)

This seals our compact then with Your Highness.

GUSTAVE

With our signatures affixed to the written instrument, it does. (*Pockets a paper.*)

SALOMON

The money will be paid into your treasury by special messenger.

GUSTAVE

I can guarantee he won't have to turn back for lack of room in my vaults.

GUDULA

I hope the gentlemen will do me the honor to take a glass of wine on the garden-grounds.

(GUSTAVE *accepts with a bow.*)

GUDULA

Your Highness, could you make up your mind to a little chat with an old woman? Will you stop here with me—alone for a few minutes? I ask it as a favor.

GUSTAVE

You confer one, Madam.

GUDULA

Salomon, be good enough to precede us to the garden with Count Fehrenberg and the others. (*Exeunt, leaving the* DUKE *alone with* FRAU GUDULA.)

GUDULA

Now, will you sit here—quite close to me—and let me look into your face? Forget for a few minutes that I am an old Jewess and you a reigning prince.

GUSTAVE

I am doing that often enough—and gladly, believe me, Baroness.

GUDULA

I must have speech with you about Charlotte. Don't let my blundering give you offense. I am doing the office of grandmother for the first time to-day, and in such a grave business too. That frightens me. Mind, Duke Gustave, my son Salomon sees in this affair no more than he wishes to see, my good little Lottie is an orphan, and I must stand her in her mother's stead. I must make bold to ask questions. Tell me, Duke Gustave, doesn't this match with my granddaughter strike you as brought about in a venturesome way?

GUSTAVE

Granted, Baroness, but it is just this element of adventure that delights me in my alliance with your beautiful grandchild.

GUDULA

I don't follow you.

GUSTAVE

I won't account for my future by graded rule as an old privy councillor will account for his career. A traditional alliance between the high-born is *vieux jeu*. The world is tired of the old game and so am I—I mean to play a new one.

GUDULA

It's hazardous. Besides, we are such a straight-lived set. What a life you must have led!

GUSTAVE

It was a life of adventure from the beginning. In my boyhood the thronelets of my relatives shook as during an earthquake. One day my father's throne was put into the big Corsican bag. We went into exile—to Vienna. There my father died. I chose to spend his money in Paris. Just when I had run through with my fortune, Napoleon, in a manner of speaking,

had run through his. The Empire collapsed. I was reinstated into my duchy—and my revenues. The revenues are gone, and my duchy would follow suit, if your sons had not interceded. You perceive now that I am used to looking upon life as an adventure.

GUDULA

Duke Gustave, you are playing with life at hazard. It turns my head giddy to think of it. I am fearing for my grandchild. Matrimony is a serious matter. I may say that—I have lived happily with my Meyer Amschel in quite another walk of life.

GUSTAVE

Baroness, I pray you rest assured——

GUDULA

(*roughly*)

Don't call me Baroness, Duke Gustave, it's too much like a mummery.

GUSTAVE

Madam, the Emperor——

GUDULA

Stuff and nonsense—the Emperor can't make me a noblewoman at seventy-one years of age.

GUSTAVE

And yet, Madam, your nobility may be of the oldest.

GUDULA

You might save your compliments for my Lottie. With her they may avail you, perhaps. With me they won't. I won't play Providence in so complex a matter. Let my grandchild decide for herself.

(*Enter* CHARLOTTE *with* SALOMON, *later on* NATHAN, AMSCHEL *and* JACOB.)

SALOMON

Now your little *tête-a-tête* is at an end.

GUDULA

It was not a satisfactory one to either of us, I am afraid.

GUSTAVE

Herr Baron, you are familiar with the nature of my present errand. I have the honor to ask for the hand of your daughter in marriage.

SALOMON

Supremely honored. As a matter of course, you are welcome. Embrace your betrothed, pray.

CHARLOTTE

Without my assent? Father, you misconceive me. I feel deeply humiliated.

SALOMON

Humiliated! Why?

CHARLOTTE

Because I have been offered in marriage.

SALOMON

These are mere formalities. Prearranged matches are customary in our circles.

CHARLOTTE

A detestable custom. What must Duke Gustave think of me?

"Duke Gustave, you are playing with life at hazard"

GUSTAVE

But, dearest Baroness, it's the same all over in *our* set. Only with us it is called politics.

CHARLOTTE

Duke Gustave, I am doing true service to both of us in saying no.

SALOMON

What do you mean?

CHARLOTTE

Do you know what I am feeling? Father, do you believe that I could be happy without a home? For I could never find a home in that castle, with all the servants laughing at me behind my back! And the portraits on the wall staring at me and seeming to say: If you please—you have come here too soon—wait another century or so! No, if I marry—(*taking flight to her grandmother*)—Grannie, why don't you help me? (GUDULA *talks to her soothingly. In the meantime,* AMSCHEL *and* JACOB *have joined the company.* JACOB *takes an armchair in the corner.*)

SALOMON

Your Highness will pardon this untoward incident. I guarantee that my daughter will presently alter her resolution. In our house children have to mind their parents.

GUDULA

Have they? Then you will have the goodness to mind *me* and to let the girl have her way in this! Duke Gustave, I am sure you will understand.

GUSTAVE

Candidly, I have by no means felt sure of the Baroness. (*To* SALOMON:) Under the circumstances, what becomes of our agreement?

SALOMON

(*perplexed*)

Donnerwetter!—the money has already been paid into your treasury.

GUSTAVE

Of course, it is at your disposition—that is to say, if there is anything left. I can't conceal from you that a good many people have been waiting its arrival—let me return you your contract.

GUDULA

(*imperiously*)

You keep your own. Highness, be glad you have it. If I know these gentlemen, my sons, at all, they have taken uncommon good care not to be the losers in the bargain.

AMSCHEL

Quite right, Mother. We never go back on our signature. Come now, Your Highness, and let us calmly discuss the situation.

(*Goes off with the* DUKE.)

SALOMON

Incredible! To be overreached by such a young fool of a spendthrift—I say, there must be a special Providence in these matters.

GUDULA

Perhaps he is brainier than you think him.

SALOMON

If that's so, then I regret all the more that I can't have him for a son-in-law. (*Turning to* CHARLOTTE.) There is more to this than appears on the surface. We are left to ourselves now, state your reasons.

CHARLOTTE

(*half turning to* JACOB, *who, rising, follows her words with perceptible emotion*)

You know them. I'll have no sneering courtier, but a human being with a heart, one of my own kind—one to whom I can be more than to the Duke.

SALOMON

(*puzzled*)

Yes?

CHARLOTTE

Yes, father, one to whom I shall be his strength and joy in life, and live with him as grandfather lived with Grannie.

SALOMON

I clearly see you have already made some choice.

CHARLOTTE

I have.

SALOMON

Then tell me.

CHARLOTTE

Not yet.

SALOMON

Then there must be something wrong! What is he?

CHARLOTTE

A merchant.

SALOMON

(*disdainfully*)

Every cap-dealer calls himself a merchant nowadays. What's his line.

CHARLOTTE

Banking.

SALOMON

I see. Then I'll probably know him.

CHARLOTTE
(*pleasantly*)

You know him well.

SALOMON

Has he any money?

CHARLOTTE

As much as you have.

SALOMON

You overestimate that Great Unknown. Has he a bank of his own?

CHARLOTTE

As large an establishment as yours.

SALOMON

Tut, tut! Does he come from a good family?

CHARLOTTE

As good a family as ours.

SALOMON
(*in a semi-whisper*)

Is he a Jew?

CHARLOTTE

Yes.

SALOMON

To be sure. Who is he, then?

CHARLOTTE

If you must know—he who stands speechless in that corner yonder. Your brother Jacob!

(JACOB *folds* CHARLOTTE *in his embrace.*)

SALOMON

Excellent! And that's what I have been working and hoarding for—for my own brother!

GUDULA

Salomon, dear, don't you say no.

SALOMON

I am not saying no. Only I could have arranged that more simply—and less expensively.

GUDULA

Salomon, what would you have? Is your brother's, your child's happiness nothing? Cannot you be contented?

SALOMON

(*softening into a broad smile*)

Yes, Mother dear—I am.

CURTAIN.

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